

# HYPHENATED

AUGUST ANDERSON

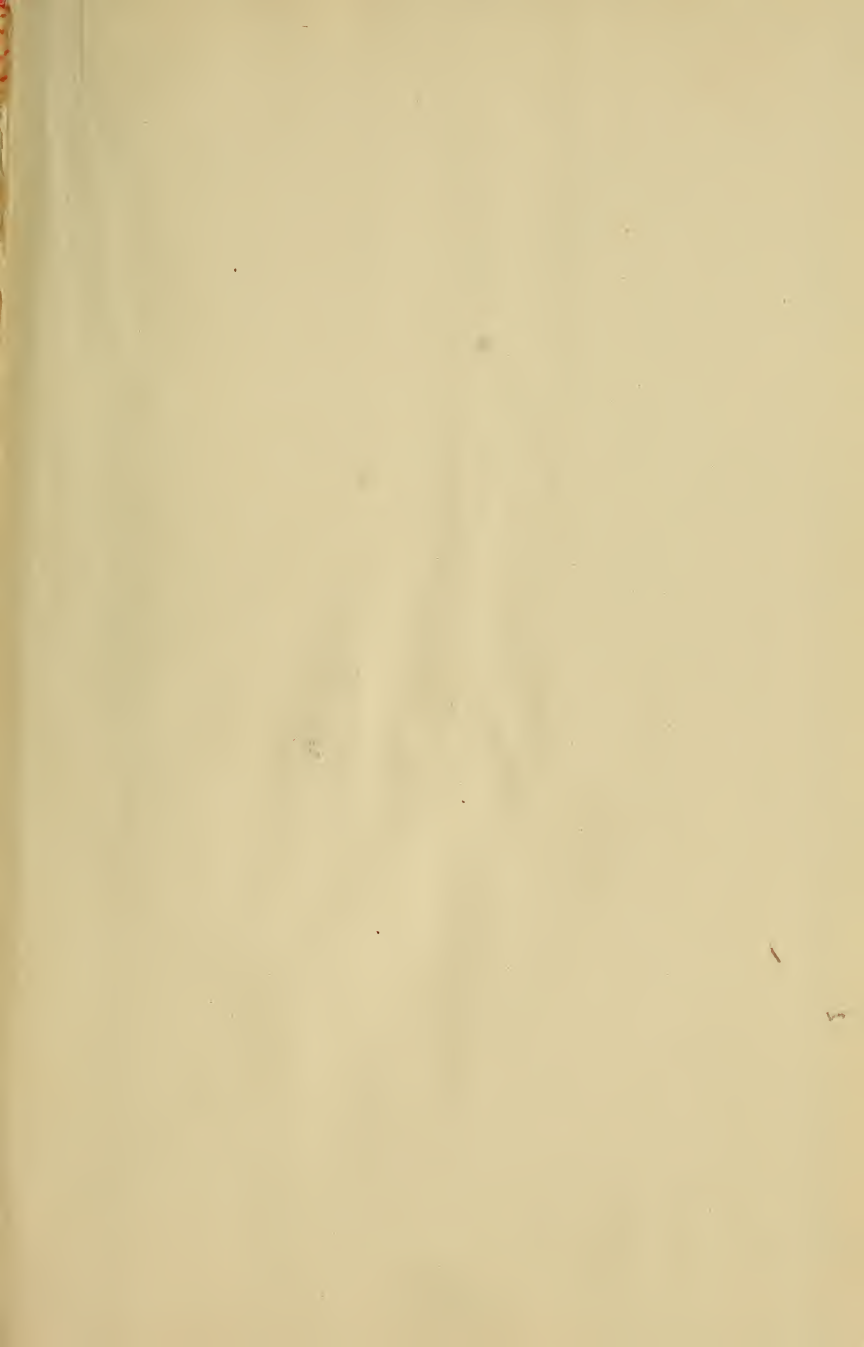


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# HYPHENATED

OR

THE LIFE STORY OF  
S. M. SWENSON



BY

AUGUST ANDERSON, Q-r.

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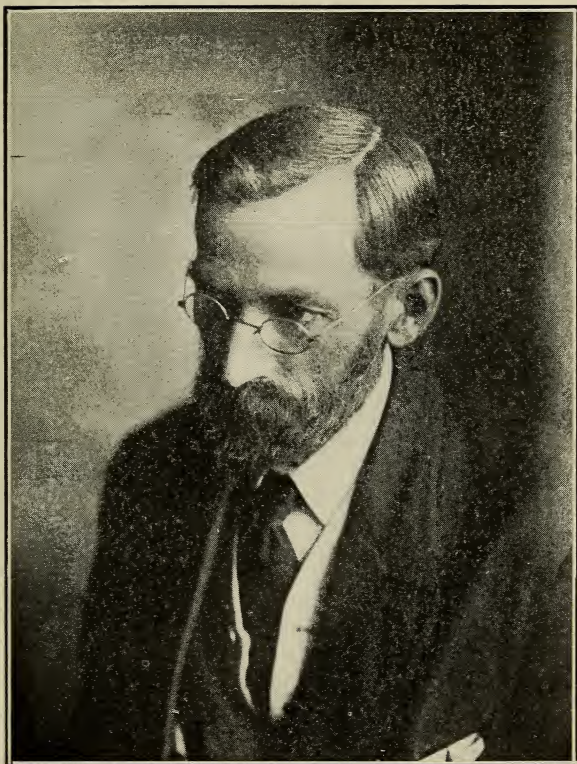
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AUG. ANDERSON, Q-r.



## DEDICATION.

To the foreign born citizen, who, combining the best of two hemispheres, has thus faithfully toiled to develop this glorious country, and dignify the “hyphen,” this book is fondly and lovingly dedicated.

AUGUST ANDERSON, Q—R.



## INTRODUCTION.

Those who knew Colonel Swenson need not be told that he was a remarkable and prominent man in his day. Those who did not know him will have a chance to find out by reading this book.

Some will know more of Texas, her prominent men and historical events, when they are through with this book than they knew before they took it up. It has been a great pleasure to write it. Many a pain and discomfiture from ill health has been forgotten, when the writing "spell" has been on. And a grateful acknowledgment is hereby given to all sources from which I have gathered information.

First to Mrs. Delia Bergstrom for permission to search the dusty, musty, damp, and dark cellar in the old consulate of the late consul Sir Swente Palm. I used to call it my "gold mine" even if it "undermined" my health.

Next comes my old friends August B. Palm, Susanna and J. G. Palm, Dr. Oscar Hedborg and brother, my old friends S. A. Lundell of Decker, and J. Swenson of Georgetown, as well as Mr. Andrew and Willie Palm of Round Rock. I am indebted to Mrs. Mills, daughter of the loyal patriot, Gen. J. A. Hamilton, and her sister, Mrs. Malony, for historical notes and kindly criticism.

The authors, books, and articles consulted, are, as near as I can remember: Dr. Stamline's article, "Svenskarne i Texas," Schon's "Swente Palm," Schon's "Barkerydsheren som blef millionar," Col. Mackemson's "Historical Sketch," Williams' "Life of Houston," Smithwick's "Evolution of a State," Mrs. Pearl Cashell Jackson's "Austin, Yesterday and Today," and her little gem of a book, "Texas Governors' Wives."

To my patient wife and children, who have allowed me to write in peace, and bore them with my everlasting talk about early times in Texas, and its prominent men, I am greatly indebted.

To my life-long friend Mr. Alex. Johnson of Decker, whose financial assistance has enabled me to get the book published in time for the holidays, and to the circle of true friends who encouraged me by voluntarily subscribing for the book long before it went to the press, I am under great obligation.

For the kind words of encouragement, I am exceedingly thankful.

And with the fond hope that I have been able to set forth with some degree of clearness a good strong mind's superiority over matter, I remain the public's humble servant,

AUGUST ANDERSON, Q—R.

AUSTIN, TEXAS, Nov. 22, 1916.



## CHAPTER I

### THE FOREIGNER.

The store-keeper was furious. The young man standing before him, erect and indignant, contended that he had only done his duty as he knew it. He tried to explain, and received an almost stunning blow. That was way back in the "good old days" when a man could "thrash" his underlings if he had a mind to. To be exact, this took place in 1836 in the good old country of Sweden, where "no slavery ever existed."

To the insulted young man it smacked pretty much of serfdom, and when Lars Larson followed up his correction with the following threat: "Dare to sass back next time when I speak to you, and I'll teach you your place," it was all the young Swen Swenson could do to keep his temper.

He was a rather slender but pleasant looking young man with a noble forehead, eyes gray and dominant that revealed nothing and concealed everything. A mouth with all the beauty, curves, and goodness, that

an artistic mind could demand, an electric movement when doing things that was marked with a marvelous precision. Gracious action and manner seemed natural and inborn, although he was only one of the many country boys, who grew up and had to work his way through life.

In the dusty twilight he looked anything but pleasant and gracious. The flaming cheek where the blow struck and the swelling veins on his forehead, the distended nostrils and clenched hands as he watched the vanishing form of Larson, all together, distorted the features and gave them an unnatural, reckless appearance.

"Oh, you 'Lasse' you," he muttered to himself, "just because you are big and rich and coarse, you can't understand that I am just as smart, successful, and well-liked as you are, and maybe a little more. And so you are going to teach me my place, but by the eternal righteous God, I am just as much in my right to enjoy these things as you are. So good-bye, 'Lasse'! good-bye!"

He wheeled around as one seized by a new determination. In the crowded corner of the store where the rickety bed stood, he lighted a tallow candle and stuck it on the box used for a table. Then he wrote with a pencil on a yellow paper:

"Dearest Mother: When you read this letter, I

am on my way to America. I will get there one way or the other, and I will make my fortune there. See if I don't. Then I will come home and buy you a big estate. I would come by just to see you once more, Mother, but then we would wake Father, and no one knows how things would go then. I will be twenty-one next year, then I won't have to ask for permission of anybody. Best greetings to Johan, Hedda, Johanna, and Anna, as well as Father. God be with you.

“Your Swen.”

Swen had received his wages for the first half year just the week previous. Being of a mercantile mind he had not decided how to invest it. To spend it would be a crime; but now the little sum was going to help him out of the country, and maybe he could earn a penny between times. He felt confident that he could manage it all right. Others had done it, why not he? In the old farmstead at Lattarp, everyone was asleep when he stole up to the wooden shutter and deposited the letter through a new-moon-shaped cut in the woodwork. There was a tear and a sob when the old dog that knew him so well, came around and greeted him affectionately.

“No, old boy, no, not tonight; no you must not follow; go back”—the voice choked. Then he took the little bundle in his hand and set out in the big wide dark world. “Good Lord, help me,” he cried in

broken tones as he speeded away from home and friends and birth-place.

How he took passage on a ship to England, and from there to America; how he worked on different jobs, went to school, and two years later was ship-wrecked outside of Galveston in the year 1838, is the preliminary of a romantic career, which continued in Texas for a period of twenty-five years.

There is an old story from the young man's early days in New York, to the effect, that one day when he was buying a choice piece of roast in a meat market and had put it aside to pay for it, an officer came in—later General Pearson—and on seeing the fine roast said, "I want that."

The butcher explained that it was already sold, but Swen spoke up quickly:

"If you like it, you can have it, sir."

The officer apologized like a true gentleman, but Swen persisted:

"If you like it, I shall be more than pleased; I can buy a cheaper cut that will suit my purse better."

The conversation that followed resulted in Pearson taking the choice cut of meat; the young man receiving an invitation to "come and see him"; a life-long friendship; and one of Swen's boys bearing the name "Pearson" some twenty years later.

This little incident illustrates how "Swen" made friends, and retained them through life.

You can take more liberties in a fictitious story and dramatize it to suit your fancy, but a real story has some advantages over fiction that appeals strongly to more serious-minded readers.

The life of Swen Swenson, his uprightness, his industry, his neverfailing optimism, his thrift, his living up to an ideal, his modest bearing when that ideal was a reality, is a story that can not fail to interest any one in whose blood pulses the love of humanity. Such lives as his are a monument to the hyphenated American, and an inspiration to our sons.

## CHAPTER II

### A FOOTHOLD.

When Swenson was shipwrecked on the beach of Galveston 1838, it was not much of a town. Being destitute, having lost all he had in the storm, he had to beg for his first meal. The kind landlady had not the heart to refuse him, but before the sun went down that day, Swenson had established himself as a successful business man, and could pay for his board.

Going down to the beach he noticed some casks, bales and boxes of goods from the wrecked ship, and having as good right as any one else to take possession of salvage, he set up a little primitive business, which was his first transaction, in the then young, two-year-old republic.

He always had a knack of getting in with prominent people, and was soon recognized on account of his pleasing, efficient way of dealing with people. Mr. Adrian, the merchant of Columbus, soon recognized the ability of the promising young man, and took him in his employ. Thus went the first year.



The seat of Government had been removed to Houston and the little Statehouse with its "shedroom" in Columbus, where so much of important early history had been planned and enacted, was occupied by a private citizen. President Lamar, it was rumored, planned for a more centrally located seat of Government up on the Colorado river on the frontier. Swen was all ears, and gathered all the gossip he heard, but like the wise fellow he was, thought his own thoughts, and took no one in his confidence. He would like to get in on the groundfloor, where this new site was to be located. To be sure, he did not have much to start with, but maybe he could pick up, or get in with a good partner. On a visit to Houston where President Lamar and all the style of Texas was to be found, he tried to find out what the chances would be. Someone overheard and communicated the news to Mr. Adrian: "If you value the young man's service, give him the promotion he deserves," read the mesage, "you will find it a wise move."

"How would you like to go in partnership with me, Swen?" asked Mr. Adrian one day.

"What have you in mind to offer," he asked cautiously. The gray eyes shifted color but revealed nothing.

"Oh, any old agreement that will tie you to the business here for a good long while. You see the

old mule and spring wagon? For \$200 I will sell the outfit to you, then you load up with goods and travel around among the colonists and sell to them. We will divide the profits equally, and when at home in the store you get the same on all the goods you sell."

Swenson looked his prospective partner fully in the face. "If you will allow me to fit up my own rig the way I want it, we will shake hands on the trade—but I don't want to disgrace the firm or our business with that old rickety outfit."

"Stuck up, are you?"

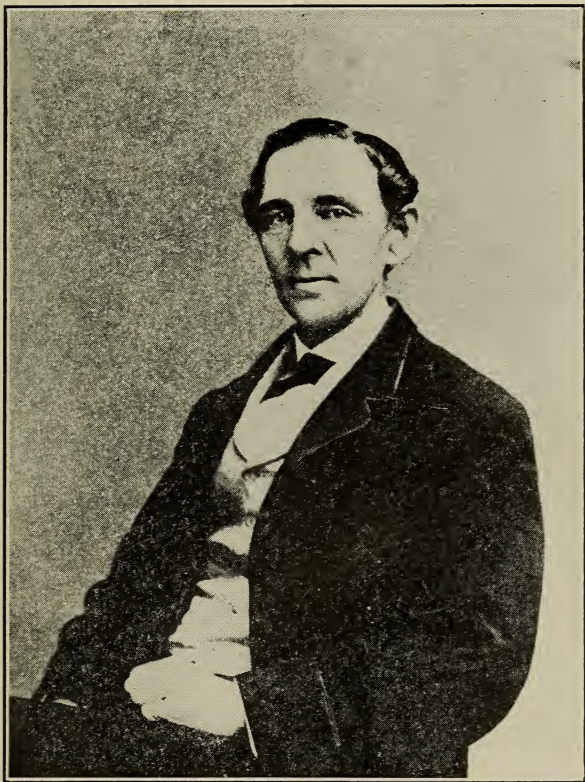
"No," replied Swen, "but I want to start in the right way, so it will be a creditable advertisement for the home place. You see it is introducing me and advertising you."

So they clasped hands on it, and the contract was drawn up in writing and duly signed.

It was no ordinary affair that Swen ordered and fitted up on his next trip to Houston—a brand new painted, shining ambulance with a top overhead and "Columbus Supply House" gayly painted on the side curtains. Two fat, sleek black horses with shining nickle plated harness, a little ebony colored servant to open the gates and hold the horses as well as take care of them, made up the outfit which Swen brought home one day.

The old mule brayed and hee-hawed when the rig





S. M. SWENSON



drove up to the store. Adrian open his eyes wide in surprise, scratched himself behind the left ear, chewed a fresh bite of "terbaccer" furiously for a few seconds. Then he said:

"Well, Swen, if you aint got that grain of mustard in you that the Scripture tells about, I'll be doggone. I have heard 'old Sam' talk about 'hitching your wagon to a star,' or some fool talk like that, but it seems to me you have got that 'ideer' in your head fast and good. But mebbe you are right. Mebbe!"

And Swen M. Swenson, as he now signed his name, was ready next morning bright and early, with a good load of merchandise and his ebony "Jim" to start on the journey. Besides coffee, tea, tobacco and light weight provisions, he had a supply of quinine and medicines, dry goods and fine things for the women folks, and a good supply of home made molasses candy for the children. If "Old Lasse" could have seen the young merchant that morning in the elegant new rig with his black servant and "high style," he would probably have forgotten his threat to teach Swenson his place. Perhaps Swen thought a moment along these lines during the first mile, for he turned to Jim and said with a smile: "Now, Jim, I think we can stand any kind of competition for a while."

It was not an easy matter to find the location of

different farmsteads—so hidden away were they in the canebreaks along the Brazos lowlands. There were not many cash sales during the early part of the year when crops were growing and money scarce. Once in a while he struck some newly arrived colonist with a fresh supply of money, whose mind was not weaned from the things of vanity, which the early settlers had learned to look on as luxuries. Then there were the big planters with a lot of slaves and hundreds of acres in cultivation, with beautiful ladies of good taste who would welcome even a peddler with lace and embroideries.

But Swenson aimed at appearing rather a drummer and salesman; with the planter he talked of “our supply house” in Columbus, and proposed to close contracts for big orders; with the ladies he talked style and latest fashions, and the molasses candy pleased wonderfully where there were littel tots, and the courteous young merchant seemed to fit in everywhere. He talked politics, discussed the economic outlook and possibilities, and always had a kind nod and smile for the black hands, which made them fairly tumble over one another in their eager desire to do him a favor. They would stand, at nightfall, a respectful distance from the wagon while the “white folks” were around, then they would crowd a little closer, eager to get a peep at the grand things which this shining outfit

must contain. If any one of them was lucky enough to get a red bandana or any other trinket for a hoarded piece of money, he was envied for many a day. They talked about "Marser Swenson" and his "nigger," and wondered when they were coming back.

Then there were the high-waymen—the gambling class, drinking men and men of desperate acts, outlaws, and fugitives from other states—many with a fellow-man's blood on his conscience and hands—who were reckless with their pistols, especially if anything were to be gained. The stray Indian who stole around on the outskirts of civilization, was not to be left out of the reckoning.

Two horsemen on fine horses overtook him one day. One was the proverbial wearer of the gray hat and Indian blanket.

"Hello there, young man! Going to start with a circus show."

"Not exactly, General. It is more like a Methodist circuit rider performance."

"The D—you are! No circuit riding preacher ever traveled in such style as you do. We need them mighty bad down here though. Fact is, this country is going to H— quicker than any I have seen, and the Indians take what the D— can't lay hold of. Still I guess I need 'ligion as bad as any one. Heard about the massacre up on Brushy creek? No?

"Seems likes 150 whites were killed up there by the d——d Lipans. Carelessness, whiskey, and this d——d rotten Indian policy. They say Burleson, Rev. Gilleland, and I don't know how many more, were killed. Have you any 'gin' along with you?"

"No, General."

"Any tobacco and quinine?"

"If you will stop, General, I will be glad to supply you with anything you need. Have a Havanna, General?"

"By thunder, that is a good one! Put me by five pounds of tobacco, eight ounces of quinine, and a few cigars, and send me the bill at Houston."

"I would be glad, General, to make you a present of this box of cigars if I were sure of not meeting up with other gentlemen of quality."

"Will you have a glass of Madeira, General?"

"I will take two, my boy. That was d——d good stuff. Come and see me Swenson when you visit my town," and off they were in a cloud of dust.

"That was 'old Sam'," said Swenson to himself more than to his servant.

"It shore was," echoed Jim.



## CHAPTER III

### A DREAM.

“And oh, Cousin Jeanette, we had such a nice time over at Lipton’s. You ought to have been there. You know they are such a refined people and the girls, just as sweet and accomplished as if they had been to Miss Butler’s Seminary in Tennessee. They have a splendid mother, and, oh dear, how I wish my own dear mother was alive. But then I have no right to complain, and make you sad, too; but we sure had a fine time.”

“Without any boys?”

“Oh bless your heart, we had company. But I will have to tell you, Cousin, how it all happened, or you will laugh at me.

“You see, it was this way: last night just an hour before sunset, a vehicle, shining and glistening in the slanting rays of the sun, was seen coming through the fields. We wondered if it could be ‘old Sam’ who had changed style and taken to a carriage, or if it were the president who was out traveling and visiting.

And would you believe it, it was just the finest kind of a rig with a handsome young salesman looking like a prince in disguise, traveling around with his servant selling goods and representing a concern in Columbus."

"Oh, it is just a peddler."

"Peddler nothing! I tell you, Cousin, he looks no more like a peddler, than you look like Aunt Dinah out in the kitchen! And as I was saying, we had the most interesting conversation. Do you know I believe he has even traveled in Europe, although I don't see how he could have done so at his age."

"He must be a middle-aged man."

"No, he is not; he looks like he was just of age; but he may be one or two years older than that. I cannot describe him. He will come over here sometime I am sure. I wish he would come and stay overnight, then you can see for yourself."

Cousin Jeanette smiled a sympathetic smile as she took the young girl's hand tenderly in her own. "Cora, I believe you are a little in love with the young prince, already. Aren't you?"

The fresh, blooming girl with the milk and strawberry complexion, attainable only in a northern climate, smiled shyly.

"I could not help that I dreamed of him that night, was that so very wrong?"



"No, I guess you could not help that, but dear, wait till I have had a chance to look at him. I am afraid he is nothing but a common peddler."

"Wait for what, Cousin? Do you think I am going to propose to him? Do you think I am crazy? Do you—" But a conciliatory kiss, silenced the lips and prevented a friendly feminine quarrel.

"And then you know I have to go home to Tennessee next month. I'll wager you, father is going to marry an ugly old maid so he can offer me a 'congenial home' again."

"Well, if you don't like it you can always come back to me. As long as I have a home, you have a shelter," said Mrs. Long, as she laid her hands lovingly on the girl's damp curls.

"You have always been my own dear Cousin Jeanette, and I'll never have any secrets from you," and she kissed her fondly in return. "But how is the Doctor, tonight?"

"He is feeling better and stronger, I believe."

"Oh, I hope he will get strong and well down here. It is such a beautiful and romantic country."

"Yes, but it is full of malaria the doctor says. These fertile bottoms are not healthy."

"But you raise splendid crops."

"Yes, and perhaps the conditions will be better in the winter."

\* \* \* \* \*

Dr. Long was one of the many who came to Texas seeking health in those early days. The mild climate—so often spoken of and praised, should be beneficial in his case he reasoned and so with his 35 negroes, and property converted into money, he came to Texas and invested at once in the old “Finckley Farm,” which seemed a good proposition with its four or five hundred acres of fertile bottom lands and unlimited pasture uplands. He was an educated, refined, professional man, who sensitively shrank from mixing with the coarse class of people so plentiful in Texas in those days. Tall, slender, of a retiring disposition and a meditative temperament with a few congenial friends he spent most of his time at home, and did not take much interest in the management of the farm as long as the overseer was not brutal and violent with his slaves or dishonest with his superior.

His wife—the cousin of Cora McCready who had come down for a visit—was a little younger than the Doctor, of rare beauty and refinement, with that transparent complexion that reminds you of a white lily, and a pair of luminous dark eyes that twinkled like stars. Add to this the most musical voice and intonation in song and conversation, and you will agree with the Doctor that she was—to him at least—“better than a thousand other women together.” The

slaves fairly worshipped her, and she deserved it. There was no ill treatment of negroes on the old "Finckley Farm" as far as she could help it, and the little knowledge of medicine that she had learned from her husband came to benefit many an ailing negro on the place. No wonder that on all occasions they called on the "Mist'ess" first.

\* \* \* \* \*

The visit of the expected young salesman did not occur until late in the fall. Cora McCready left for Tennessee several months previous. The romance if the reader has anticipated one—is therefore nipped in the bud. Cotton and other products yielded immense returns. Money was circulating once more. Collections were good and young Swenson and his outfit fairly shone as they came around once more. Not satisfied with the polished nickel trimmings on the harness, he had the ambulance overhauled, painted over again, brass and nickel trimmings put on, which Jim was required to give a touch up every morning. A pair of new steelgray steeds pranced before the wagon and confidence, satisfaction, and accommodation radiated from the young merchant.

The Doctor was favorably impressed with him from the first moment. Mrs. Long looked more critically on the young man, but had to admit, that she could find nothing to prejudice her. The two men talked

business and drugs for a while, and when Swenson was invited to stay overnight, he graciously accepted the hospitality offered, although there were some hours left of the day which could have been profitably employed.

Going down the steps he ordered Jim to unhitch, rub down the horses and clean the ambulance.

"Do you touch it up every day like that?" inquired Long.

Every day we have time or in the morning before we start."

"How about mud and rain?"

"We hardly ever travel on muddy days, and if the wagon gets muddy, it is easier to clean it every night before it gets dry."

"Where did you learn to keep things in order like that, young man?"

"Observation and determination taught me, sir. If you want to get ahead in this world you will have to keep well in front, in fact, a little bit ahead of others."

"And how have you succeeded? Made any money?"

"Fairly well. Another year like this and I will be able to establish a big mercantile business in the Capital myself."

"In Houston?"

"No, Austin."

“So you have faith in that frontier proposition also? Don’t you know ‘old Sam’ is opposed to it?”

“So would you or I be if we had a Capital city which bore our name. But onward, westward grows civilization, and General Houston cannot stop it.”

“Sam can do a heap, when he has a mind to. I would not stand in his way when he is up and doing.”

“He will be our next President, but I don’t think he can move the Capital.”

How “old Sam” came near doing the thing in 1842 every reader of Texas History knows.

The general crowd of slaves congregated around the wagon that night. More money changed owners than ever before on the plantation. Harmonicas and Jews harps were purchased, and many a jig was danced that night by young black feet.

Swenson and the Longs were sitting on the piazza enjoying the mild night air and the scenery. Towards the Brazos, stretched the level fertile field adjoining other large plantations. It was the prophesy of the wilderness coming true. The shaggy liveoaks surrounding the place, and the timberland back of it furnished a setting for a picture that you would have to travel far and near to excel. From the negro quarters came the hilarious sounds breaking what would perhaps otherwise have impressed you as a monotonous surrounding.



“An almost perfectly ideal place,” observed Swenson.

“Yes,” admitted the Doctor, “and yielding good crops. If I only had a thoroughly efficient and reliable overseer, something like you, Mr. Swenson,” he struck him friendly on the knee, “I think I should be in harmony with the whole world. Say Swenson,” he spoke up with a sudden energy, “I have heard of you and your ability in business long before this, why can’t you move over here and be my overseer? This old fellow Benson I have here is a regular brute. I can’t stand him, and the negroes often have a hard time under him, when it is the busy season. You know how the hands are. Get them in good singing condition with the keen expectation that something good is coming their way soon, and they will work with a swing, and a will that does you good to look at. But get them in a sulky mood and you can’t get half the work out of them. Besides their mistreatment gets on my nerves. I will pay you a handsome salary and you will be treated as one of the family. How much salary would it take to equal the income you have on the road?”

Swenson mused a while: “I am afraid, Doctor, that it would take more than any overseer ever was paid in these parts of the country.”

“Well, I thought so.”

"But the work on the road is a tiresome one, Swenson added, "and it doesn't appeal very much to me. I will think the matter over. Besides, it is a risky matter to travel around with collected money on hand; I would not be the first traveler in these parts who disappeared without leaving any trace. You have no idea, Doctor, how comfortable and secure a place like this looks to a wayfarer who has to rough it many a time."

"I guess I understand you, Swenson."

It was time to retire.

"Would it not be next to perfection, if you could have a young efficient man on the place, at the table, and for general conversation when you felt like talking—like this young man," the Doctor asked his wife on retiring.

"And you are sure you never would be jealous having a handsome young fellow around the place all the time?"

He caught her head between his hands and looked in her eyes. "Say, you are not likely to be that Eve who would let a serpent in our garden?"

She met his gaze without flinching. "I have not been raised to regard my marriage vows that way," she replied, and kissed him tenderly on the forehead. "I have been perfectly happy with you so far, even if children have been denied us. God knows best.

Don't you worry, dear. I just thought to point out to you the one imperfection that you would have to guard yourself against. If I had entertained any secret thoughts, I would not have spoken at all. Can you believe me, Ed?"

"Oh, yes, dear. I have always believed in you. But do you know," he lowered his voice and spoke solemnly, "if I were to die and leave you in this new country, I have the impression that I would just as soon leave you and the estate in his care as in that of anybody else in this world."

She looked in consternation. "Please don't talk that way, Ed," she said with tears in her eyes.

Swenson departed next morning with the promise to "call again." Mrs. Long hunted up pen, ink and paper and wrote Cora a letter.

"My dear Cousin Cora:

"I have seen your prince. He stayed with us last night. I admit now that he does not look like any peddler, but on the contrary seems to be the equal of any of us.

"Ed. seemed to like him even more than I did, and wanted to engage him as an overseer on the plantation. If these plans materialize, you must come down and complete your romance. To see you happy would be a great satisfaction. I am sure that young man is going to make his mark in the world.



“Ed. is doing well these fall days, and crops are abundant. I believe Texas is all right after all.

“Your loving cousin,

“JEANETTE.”

## CHAPTER IV

### DREAMS—STREAMS.

“My dear Cousin Jeanette:

“So you have seen the prince. It took you a good long while to get your eyes on him. I have been under the impression that you considered him only a simple peddler, and I came finally to look on him in the same light. Thought I was mistaken, you see? I have found that impressions are not to be relied upon at all. And I want to be a sensible woman and learn to take care of myself and my property. You know mother willed me a little property which I have taken possession of. I am going to see if I can make money out of it, or make the ends meet, at least. Prince or no prince, I don't care much. But the man I will eventually marry, will have to be pretty much like that young Swede. But don't try to plan a love match. I am a hard-hearted business woman now, but my love for you is as true as ever.

“Your loving Cora.”

The good trade which Swenson had established, enabled him to purchase the half interest in the

Columbus store business. The season was a rainy one, and he decided to rest up a while, work in the store, and give the horses a good rest. Mr. Adrian was seen to enter the store one night with a cup of fresh sweet milk. Swenson who wanted to talk some matters over with him went after him.

"Look out there," exclaimed Mr. Adrian, and pulled Swenson towards one side while he poured the milk in a saucer standing under the desk. The two men stood watching the saucer, when suddenly a big rattlesnake approached the milk. It was a huge rattler thick and well fed, that lapped the milk with evident content.

Swenson looked on in consternation. "Is that part of the business I have bought?" he managed to ask at last.

Adrian nodded: "I guess so."

"But you never said anything to me about him."

"Well, you may consider him as a third party. Or a nightwatchman. I guess he catches the rats in the night-time."

"It would not be a pleasant job for a robber to tackle the money safe with such a watchdog around," remarked Swenson.

"I would rather have him, than a dog in here. This is the second year that he has been coming. He comes

in about nightfall and coils up under the desk. In the morning he is gone again."

"I hope he is not going to bring a curse on us, like the old snake did in the garden."

"He has only brought us good luck so far.

\* \* \* \* \*

Although the young man was successful, well liked and made friends right and left, there were times when he was the victim of heavy depression. Separated from his relatives and old home, he could not help when a feeling of loneliness stole over him. True, he wrote letters home, and received prompt replies, but the letters seemed only to intensify the feeling. He tried to induce his uncle—one year older than himself—to come over and settle here, they would go in business together and would make money, he was sure; but something was always interfering with these plans. Thus went another year. Sam Houston was elected president again, people were flocking to Texas, and colonizing. Business ventures prospered, and Swenson in ratio with other people. The second "runaway scrape" in 1842, when the site of Government was removed to Houston on account of Indian depredation and the Mexican activities, even if the removal of the archives from Austin miscarried, made Swenson give up his big mercantile dream of getting in on the ground floor in the new Capital.

Dr. Long's remark, "Old Sam can do a heap, when he has a mind to," made Swenson think twice before deciding anything.

Then a series of important things happened: First, the well educated, officially employed, liberally inclined uncle, the honorable, literature-loving Sir Swente Palm had decided to come over and throw in his lot with the young Republic. Was he a suitable man for this rough and ready life, which men had to put up with? Swenson almost regretted that he had invited him to come in such enthusiastic terms. He was such a bookworm, and so fastidious! What if he was just an impractical dreamer? But any kinfolks were better than none, he felt.

Then the store burned! Swenson hastened home when he heard the news.

Yes, it was true. There were \$8000 or \$10,000 worth of merchandise in ashes. Account books, everything, and no insurance. "I knew something was going to happen," said Adrian, "ever since that rattler disappeared, I knew it would come. They robbed the safe first, and then set fire to the building. The flames broke out on four different places simultaneously."

"Wonder who they could be?"

"Oh, it was a gang of reckless gamblers over in the Capital. I am sure of that. It is a miracle they have

not robbed you on the highways long before this, Swenson."

"And killed me on top of that."

"Exactly!"

"And you had all our eggs in one basket, Mr. Adrian?"

"No! I never touched what we sealed and put down in the northeast corner of the building."

"We can start up again then in a short while."

"Yes, but the worst is, our old accounts. They have gone up in smoke."

"Not mine. I have got them stored up here," and Swenson pointed to his forehead. "I can sit down today and write down every bill, goods and amount with name, and I am sure I will come within ninety-five points of hitting the mark."

"I wish I could do that."

"Try to do it as well as you can, but let us go and dig in the northeast corner."

The wooden box with the metal box packed down inside was unearthed and the rolls in gold counted a second time. How many twenty dollar gold coins in \$500 rolls were packed in there will never be known, but it was not the first, nor the last, banking transaction of its kind that Swenson resorted to.

Then came a long letter from Dr. Long. It told

of his last hemorrhage, his feeble condition, his trouble with Benson, etc.

"I know it looks selfish to load my own troubles on you at this time,"—the letter ran—"you have no doubt enough to perplex you, but if you could take up my old proposition, I may have a fighting chance to hang on to life, perhaps for a good many years. Depressed and worried like I now am, it is sapping my strength and energy.

"My wife, God bless her, is doing all that a woman can do to relieve me, but the effect is rather depressing, because we are trying to deceive each other as to outlooks, courage, and strength. When we get alone after a day's forced cheerfulness, I sob and sigh like a baby, and I know she does the same. Then there is Benson ———— !

"Come up, my dear Swenson, over Sunday if you can, and let us talk it over. The salary will be no objection. Once more, forgive me my selfishness.

"Yours for an early agreement,

"ED. LONG."

Then there was a settlement with Adrian. He was to build up the store again, and when Swenson's uncle arrived he was to take Swenson's place as a partner.

It was in a pleasant mode of mind, mingled with sympathy for his sick friend that Swenson rode up toward Richmond, the latter part of the week. To



enjoy the privilege of living under the same roof, sitting at the same table, conversing occasionally with a beautiful refined, intelligent and good woman, seemed to Swenson's mind—hungry for refined surroundings and tired to death of coarse, vulgar talk, and bachelor life—like moving next door to heaven.

Did his thoughts go further? Who knows? And if they did go further, could he help it? But the deep sorrow that he felt like a shadow hanging over the young, beautiful wife's head forbade any such thoughts to nestle in his mind. He was sincerely devoted to this singularly cultured and magnetic man, the Doctor, and felt himself willing to make great sacrifices, if it could only help his sick friend back to health.

Did he come to tell them that he could stay?

Swenson felt that the welcome he received from his hostess implied such a question.

"Well, Mrs. Long," he said, "it looks like all you have to do is to wish right hard, and you can have what you want."

"You can stay, can you?"

"If you wish me to, yes."

She gave him a searching glance.

"Excuse me, madam," he said, blushing suddenly, "but anticipating the condition of the Doctor it was

a natural conclusion with me that it depended altogether on what you said or wished to be done."

"Well, perhaps so. But if wishing hard could do anything, I would concentrate my wish day and night on Ed. getting well. But come up and see him. I think he has some fever this evening."

The hemorrhage had reduced the white, pale complexion to a bluish marble, but the welcome smile was the same as ever.

"And you have come to stay, Swenson?"

"What made you think so, Doctor?"

"Your prompt answer to my letter."

"Well, I guess I can stay."

"Then," with a sudden energy, "I can get well. Give me that hat and cane and we will go out for a stroll."

"But, dear, Mr. Swenson must have lunch after his long drive."

"Then I will join him," was the prompt reply.

A new strength and interest in life seemed to possess Dr. Long and the fair young wife felt a genuine hope and joy that was not pretention any longer.

Lunch over, the two men went out for a stroll. They went down to the overseer's house, but had to pass old Jack Burns' cabin. The Doctor told Burns the news of the new overseer coming, and the old darky's face fairly shone.

“Lawd a massy, ain’t that going to be a fine time for dese nigers! I’s shore glad, Marse Swenson, to see you.”

There was some quick “grapevine” telegraphy going on between the cabins in a little while, and joyous exclamations could be heard now and then.

Only Benson was surly and disagreeable.

“What in H—ll do you want a man to do this late in the fall? Do you think I can move out in the road with my family. D—d if I’m going to do it.”

“No profanity, Benson,” observed Long. “You know I object to it.” The Doctor was getting nervous, and changing color. Swenson thought it was time to interfere.

“You are not strong enough, Doctor, to allow such a thing to irritate you. Come, let us postpone the settlement until we all get in a more agreeable mood. And,” turning to Benson, “please don’t use such language to the Doctor. Don’t you see he is weak and exhausted?”

He took the Doctor’s arm under his, and started to walk back to the house.

“Oh, the brute!” gasped the Doctor. “I went down there to offer him good, acceptable terms, almost any-way he wanted them, and he don’t even allow a man to talk on his own place, and finish the first sentence before he cuts him off. Well, that is the way he has

grown to treat me of late. I have been too weak and passive to insist on my rights. And he is too coarse to have any consideration. If he had insulted Mrs. Long, I don't know what would have happened."

"Well, I would not let these memories hinder me from getting well," consoled Swenson. "You better let me settle with him, and not risk getting upset a second time. It may cause a fresh hemorrhage you know."

Swenson went with the Longs in the old family carriage to the Sunday morning service in Richmond, and was an agreeable companion to the friends and neighbors who visited the Long homestead, in the evening. Early Monday morning he was ready to go back to Columbus, with the promise to return at the end of the week.

"I wish you would go down and see Benson, and make a settlement with him before you go, if possible. I had intended to offer him half of next year's wage, although I have made no contract with him—if he will move out peacefully. He can take his own time, just so he is agreeable and content. No hurry about moving. Tell him that. Tell him to have some consideration for my condition. And don't start any shooting scrape on the place," he added, when he saw Swenson strap two huge pistols by the belt.

Swenson smiled. "You don't want him to run me off the place, do you? I guess he is more coward and bluff than the real stuff. But it is best to be prepared."

"Well, but don't shoot whatever you do. Any agreement and sacrifice rather than violence. You hear that."

"I will be careful, Doctor."

Benson was eating his breakfast when Swenson entered the house. He looked up with a frown.

"Want something?"

"Yes."

"Well, what is it?"

"I want a guarantee that you don't disturb Dr. Long and hurt his feelings like you did last Saturday night."

"Want to get in a scrap?"

"No, I want to save you one."

Benson pushed the plate away from him and started to rise from the table.

"Sit down, Benson," said Swenson in pleasant tone, and took a chair himself. "Let us talk business like men.

"There is enough rope and sentiment in favor of Dr. Long in this neighborhood to make your neck worth less than six bits, if his friends get to know the profanity and abusive language that you have

used when addressing the Doctor, during his illness recently. Have you thought of that? You are from Missouri, Benson, but I would hate to see you get into trouble without warning."

Benson opened his mouth and shut it again. "Is that what you had such a confab about yesterday?" he managed to say at last.

"Not at all. Dr. Long is too much of a gentleman to retaliate in such a manner, but I tell you, Benson, it will not be healthy for you in these parts when the rumor gets out. You know how such things travel, and grow. Listen to me a minute, Benson: I will pay you an overseer's wage and \$100.00 on top of that if you will take my place in Columbus, while the store is being built and goods are hauled for the store. When my uncle arrives he is going to have one room in my house in Columbus, otherwise you can occupy it free of charge. How will that suit you?"

Benson thought hard for a minute. "What will you pay me to help my moving expenses?" he asked.

"My goodness, man! is not the one hundred extra, enough to defray moving expenses?"

"And if I refuse?"

"That is your lookout. I am afraid you will find the risk greater than the pleasure or profit."

"When can I start to work at Columbus?"

"The first of December will be all right, and if you



say so, I will notify Mr. Adrian of our agreement.”

So it was agreed upon, to the astonishment of Dr. Long, when he learned that the greedy Benson was satisfied with only one hundred dollars extra. Surely his opinion of Swenson's ability had not been over-rated. And so was the “almost perfect condition” which Long had so ardently wished for attained.

Alas! how we dream sometimes—and how the stream of reality changes it.



## CHAPTER V

### PLANTATION LIFE.

The wealth of a Southern plantation was its land, its slaves, and its cotton. An aristocracy was developed that was almost as a class, opposed to the industrial ideals of the other sections of this country. The land was held in plantations and was cultivated by slaves in such a number that they would make a small village.

On such a plantation order and system prevailed. There were field hands, house servants, carpenters, blacksmiths, gardeners, cobblers, teamsters, weavers, spinners, and engineers. Their life, comfort, and happiness were entirely in the hands of the "Marser and Mist'ess," but between master and slaves was the white overseer. The responsibility was by no means small. Slaves were too valuable to be abused. One well trained slave was worth two thousand dollars in the South; and if a two hundred dollar horse elicited the sympathy and care of the master, certainly a valuable slave was well taken care of. Facts to the

contrary were exceptions, not rules, and the man who mistreated his slaves soon got to be looked upon and considered as a low, vulgar and coarse person.

There were about forty slaves on the Finckley plantation, some bought with the place, others brought by the Longs from Tennessee. Among the former were some brought direct from Africa, captured and resold as slaves to American planters. The crime of depriving human beings of their liberty and enslaving them for life cannot be too strongly condemned (just like the liquor traffic of today), but if you, my dear enlightened reader, could have seen the poor brutes, who were once captured in a tribal war, in darkest Africa, before they were recaptured and brought to America; if you could have seen their cheeks with their white streaks or scars, cut once in slits, with a fine rope inserted, so they could be tied to something to prevent their escape—you would not have thought the slavery on this continent the worst thing that could befall a negro. These wounds healed again, it is true, but the white scars told a mute story of terrible African conditions indescribable. There are two sides to everything in life, even to the slavery question.

According to an old description: The Ante Bellum days with their plantation life were not so intolerable; on an old plantation—and their number were

legion—where the slaves had been in the family for generations many masters would not permit families to be separated, and no one was sold—unless it was a vicious slave. There was an attachment for “Marster” and “Mist’ess,” and a unity of plantation life, that could not be destroyed, even by the great war. In some instances slaves did not care for freedom and would not have it when freedom came.

The slaves lived in cabins containing from one to three rooms, depending on the size of the family. Pinks, phlox, bachelor buttons, princess feathers, but-tercups, and other flowers blossomed around the door-steps. To these cabins would the children of the master go to hear old negroes like “Uncle Remus” tell tales of ghosts and animals. The master and mistress would come to inspect the home, and insist on cleanliness and sanitation.

The social life was not lacking. Parties were given. Religious meetings were held. On Saturday nights and Sundays there was an exchange of visits from neighboring plantations, and at marriages and funerals often the master and his family supervised and attended.

All the children used to call the old negroes “uncle” and “aunt.” The negroes called each other “brer” and “sis.” such a title having reference to church relationship. The children of the home were con-

stantly with the servants. They rode and played together, and at mealtime, again would the children run away to "old Auntie" to get some choice morsel to eat. To see the faithful nurse holding a feverish childish form close to her bosom all through the night, never tiring or complaining, seemed to justify the declaration from a Southern author: "If love and fidelity constitute any basis for a future morality and efficiency, then there is hope for the negro race."

The planters themselves were usually people of good birth, well educated, refined, hospitable and considerate. Not a few were judges, lawyers, doctors or public officers. To meet a Southern gentleman was and is still, a pleasure. To converse or do business with such a man was enjoyable. The stock has not died out yet. You find them here and there, and admire them as much as ever.

The pioneer women and wives used to a frontier life of danger and hardships were a characteristic class. They could run the place in the absence of their husbands, defend it against Indians, give assistance in times of trouble, and provide for the needs of the household without visiting the store every week. In fact, ninety per cent of household necessities were provided for at home. Coffee, tea and sugar, tobacco, whiskey and medicines, hardware and salt, were necessities when money was plentiful, and luxuries when

money was scarce. The colonies along the Brazos up to Bastrop were considered old established settlements with a comparatively high civilization, and secure from Indian depredation in the forties, but one of Reub Hornsby's sons was killed nine miles below Austin by Indians as late as 1845.

Swenson found himself in congenial surroundings on the Finckley plantation. The arrival of his uncle Swente Palm was a great event. With his cane in hand, broadcloth dress, and high silk hat, he looked singularly out of place. He spoke an impossible English, but could write, read, and translate it to perfection, besides he spoke French, Latin, German, and the Scandinavian dialects. He was the bookworm all right. He was only fit for office work and such things, to be sure, but he was a kinsman, nevertheless. They had so much to talk over, to plan for, to calculate, that it seemed like they would never get through. At the insistance of the Longs, Palm was a guest there for several weeks. Between the two men was cemented a friendship and mutual interests which lasted till near the end of the 19th century, when they both died.

The honorable Swente Palm had, besides a good general education, also musical talents; played the cornet, flute, guitar, and organ. He was of medium height, delicate, wore glasses, and had a punctual,

careful way of attending to business. Later, in the sectional strife that rent the country in twain, he was known and classed as one of the Union leaders, together with such men as Morgan Hamilton, Sam Harris, Sam Houston, Judge Morrel, and the Hancock.



## CHAPTER VI

### “I TOLD YOU SO.”

The seat of government was once more established at Austin. The seed of jealousy which “Old Sam” had sown so slyly, was growing into such a vigorous sentiment at Washington, D. C., that rather than allow the English Crown to annex Texas or play the protector of the young Republic, it was thought best to have it annexed as a state and be done with it. Dr. Anson Jones—President of Texas—called a convention to meet at Austin on July 4, 1845. The convention voted almost unanimously for annexation. It was a year crowded with events. The air was full of speculation and forecasts as to the probable outcome of this tremendous upheaval. War with Mexico was predicted, also a tremendous prosperity as a result of the annexation. And many a wise head had the opportunity in later years to say: “*I told you so.*”

Swenson and Palm were quiet observers of all that was going on. There was much to learn and much to unlearn. The evolution of the young empire—as



it has often been called—was not along old established lines. Sentiments, plans and resolutions—like rivers during an overflow—often went along new channels. The “kink” was to learn the general trend of things, catch hold, exercise stickability, and have something to bail with when good things were at floodstage.

“I’ll tell you, Palm,” said Swenson at one time when they had met for a talk, “I am sure the best investments and returns are in land. It is comparatively cheap now, but with this immigration going on, it is bound to go up. Let us invest in cheap land right along whenever we can. It cannot burn. It cannot be stolen, if you have a good title. There are no taxes to pay, and when you trade or want to sell, it is always available.”

Palm mused a moment: “To my mind, merchandise is the surest thing. All these people that move in, have to live. They have to buy goods in order to get along, and the merchants who have the goods get the profit. If we could go in on a grand scale in the capital city, and have a great mercantile business, I am sure we could make money.”

“Perhaps so,” admitted Swenson, “but suppose they change the site of the capital again. You can never tell with certainty what they are going to do in this country.”

“One thing is certain, Swenson, it will never be re-

moved to Columbus again. That little town will never amount to anything, and I think it was a mistake to rebuild there. The climate is not healthy either. You have to use quinine all the time to ward off malaria. I wish to move to a town with a higher altitude, before my health breaks down.

“Then again, Swenson, have you thought of land values, when all these slaves are set free?”

“Set free?”

“Yes, don’t you know, it was always one of the standing objections in Congress, that Texas was one of the slave holding countries. That was the reason they hesitated so long about admitting us as a State in the Union. And don’t you know they are going to be set free, sooner or later? What are your land values going to amount to when you have no hands to till the soil?”

“You have the advantage of an observant and educated mind, Palm, I admit that, but these things are not going to take place for a long while. And, besides, don’t the negroes need land if they are set free?”

“Yes, if they were only capable of directing and taking care of themselves. But you know what would happen, if the white man was not there to supervise the work.”

"I'll tell you what, Palm, let's tie two strings to one bow. Merchandise and investment."

"One of them is going to win; both can't fail, and if you want to move to La Grange and transfer our part of the Columbus business to that place, I'll give my consent. I have already invested some money in a tract of land adjoining the Long estate, and I am going to improve it as fast as I can get the money."

"And how is Dr. Long's health?"

"Getting worse, I am afraid. He has had two more hemorrhages since I came here. He is nothing but a shadow now."

So the two men talked and planned together.

On the Long estate everything went with smooth precision under Swenson's management. But in the "big house" there was sadness and depression.

The Doctor was sitting on the piazza, propped up with pillows in a rocker.

"Don't you know of any medicine, Ed, that could cure this disease?" inquired the young wife, with clasped hands.

The Doctor smiled feebly.

"Nothing but a high altitude like New Mexico, Arizona or Colorado would do me any good, but how could I get there? That is the question. Before I got half way, I would be a dead man."

She looked up at him with horror in her eyes.

"You don't mean that you are going to die?"

He smiled again, the rare, beautiful reflex of a mind which is at peace with its Maker, mankind, himself, and circumstances.

"Haven't we all got to die, little wife?" he said gently.

"Yes Ed, but you could live a little longer according to the common rules of life. Why can't we go home, to Tennessee?"

"For the same reason, little wife, I would be a dead man before we got there."

"But what will become of me if you die?" she asked with a forced calmness, but with a quivering lip.

"Well," he said huskily, laying his hand on her white well formed one, "I have longed for such a talk quite a while, but I have been afraid, little one, that you would or could not listen—"

Some Jay birds were hopping up and down in the trees by the piazza quarreling and setting up their shrill, piercing cries.

"Say, can't you stop them or chase them away," he asked wearily.

"Say, Dinah, can't you shoo those noisy birds away? They bother the Doctor so by their noise," Mrs. Long called to a red bandana appearing and disappearing again behind the corner.

A shining, fat, ebony black woman came out from behind with a half-picked chicken in one hand.

"Deed I can, Mistess," and immediately set up a falsetto shoo-fly, that could be heard all over the place, and caused the wandering cows up in the pasture to lift up their heads, listening, and wondering if it could be milking time so soon.

"Thar is dat lazy, good-fer-nuthin nigger, sleepin' under dat shed out in de garden. Call hisself gardener. I'll call him to keep them away, Mistess. I'se got to get that broth ready for Marse Long," and off she went, the birds hopping back as soon as she left, making a worse noise than ever.

"I declare," said the Doctor, with irritation in his voice, "they make me tired."

"Can you shoo them away, Joe?"

"I shore can, Mistess," he said, setting up a terrible yell, and clapping his hands furiously.

"My gracious, Joe! You make a worse racket than the birds," said Mrs. Long.

"Yes mam, I shore do," he said.

"Can't you throw rocks at them?"

"Yes mam, if I only could find some."

"Throw some sticks then."

The birds quarreled with him, moved away a little bit and, when they had lured him away from the

house, there they were back again on their favorite place.

“As I was saying,” the Doctor continued, “there is no remedy known for this disease. The hemorrhages I have had so far have been of a less serious character because it has been only small blood vessels, but if one of the larger arteries should burst, then”—looking her full in the face—“I might be a dead man in a little while. It will strangle me then. There is no use to send for anybody. No one can help me then, but the Eternal God in whom I trust. You will not make a scene then, but let me die in peace, holding my hand in yours while I pass away. Won’t you promise me, dear?”

She looked up, her eyes swimming in tears. She swallowed hard, but no sound came. She patted his feeble hand, but could only—for his sake—control herself from bursting out in a wild heart-rending cry.

“Then,” he resumed, “there is my will, written and deposited—together with my other papers—in the iron chest of Mr. Walter’s over in Richmond. It gives you undisputed possession of the whole estate. There is no incumbrance on it. I want you to keep it for one year after my death, about that time you will know your own mind.

“After that, you can do with it as you please.



Only be happy and don't try to grieve your life away. You are young yet, and life is before you. Listen to the advice of Rev. Gillespie, but decide for yourself. I think you will find Swenson an honest, efficient overseer. And above all, my dear, believe that the Almighty God who has made us so happy in our union, is also able to sustain you in your sorrow."

She had raised herself from her sitting position as if to interrupt him.

"Don't say anything rebellious now, [after this quiet, refreshing talk."

"Refreshing?"

Yes, for his sake, for his peace of mind, she would keep quiet, and not say anything. But she must go to her room and have it out with herself and her God. Face this greatest of sorrows with Him who created these wonderful emotions, and then bade us go out in the tempest of the world and battle with demons, temptations, circumstances, foes and even friends, sometimes, and then come home in the twilight of life and enter His rest—conqueror. To be sure the Doctor had made the good fight. If any man were going to have a crown, he was worthy of one. But for her, there seemed to be a road, oh, so long, weary, and thorny, dark and dreary!



"Oh, God," she sobbed, "let me die also, and be buried with him."

Yet, who can subdue the emotions of the soul, and the trouble which only the heart knows.

But out in the yard, under the trees, was old Joe running to and fro "shooing" quietly and throwing sticks at the Jay birds while they scolded and sassed back at him.

"What is that fool a'doing?" asked Swenson, when he came home from his ride in the fields?

"Lord a massy," said Aunt Dinah, "dat fool nigger been tryin' for nigh two hours to chase dem birds away. An' dey jus laf and laf at him. Lissen at 'em lafin and a lafin. But dis chile knows bedder dan dat. Dem's de debetis (deputies) shore's I live. I knows."

"What is that, Aunty?"

"Don't you know dem debetis, Marse Swenson? Dey been here mighty nigh all day an' a scoldin' an' a callin' for somebody. But I knows. Oh, you can't fool me, I knows."

"Who is calling, Aunty?"

"Dem debetis. Lord a massey, don' I member way back in Tinessee. Masser Long's fadder, de Capteen? I mity nigh raised dat boy myse'f."

"Who?"

"De Doctor, bless your soul. An' de Capt'n get-

tin' old an' feeble like. An' one day dem birds cum roun' de big house a scoldin' an' a lafin' an' a callin.' 'Look out,' sez I, 'callin' sumbody.' That's whut I sed. An' nex mornin' Capt'n was a dead man."

"Nonsense, Dinah!"

"Wal, you look out, Marse Swenson, an' you'll see an' member I told you so."

And Aunt Dinah stalked indignantly away to the kitchen.

"White folks don' know nothin'," she murmured to herself, "but you will see see—"

Outside, poor old Joe was running and throwing sticks at the birds in the twilight, until he had driven them behind the barns and cow lots, then they flew down to the timber, took a round-about course and came back and settled for the night, in the big cypress tree beside the house. But Joe concluded that his herding job was over for that day.

Dr. Long wanted to see Swenson that night. The two men had a long confidential talk on various subjects. The Doctor explained his condition and what he had told his wife.

"And if I should pass away suddenly, I want you to know that you are to remain on the place and run it for another year. You have my written authority to collect money, handle the funds and make

sales over an entire twelve month period, reckoned from the end of that year in which I may die."

"But my dear Doctor—"

"Don't interrupt me, Swenson; if at the end of that twelve month period my wife wants to renew the contract for another year, it is my wish that you do so if you can and are so disposed. I have learned to trust you, Swenson, and there is no one that I can think of, whom I should prefer to you."

"But, Doctor—"

"One word more, Swenson. I leave my wife without any relations. She will probably ask your advice about many things, and have to depend on you for everything"—he rose up with difficulty and groped about for Swenson's hand. "My dear Swenson"—his voice seemed to choke—"see to it that she is protected in every way a true lady should be shielded—from humiliations and scandals."

Swenson stiffened and sobered.

"I think I know my place, and my duties toward a lady," he said, with dignity. "I have not been lacking in these things since coming here, and I don't intend to change them in the future either."

"I beg your pardon, Swenson. I did not intend to insult. My God, you must not take it that way."

"I won't take it as an insult, Doctor, if my assurance will set you at ease. But if you will mistrust

after this declaration, then, I will feel insulted. But this conversation is painful, Doctor. I don't see what makes you talk this way tonight."

"Well, it never hurt a man to look a thing straight in the face, when he has to meet up with it sooner or later anyhow. I wanted very much to have this talk with you, Swenson. I don't know when my call may come."

"But you will live a long time yet, Doctor. It is painful to hear you talk that way. This is the first home-like place I have lived at for over eight years, or ever since I came to this country. I have enjoyed your company, manners, conversation, employment and everything. I make less money, but enjoy life more the way I am now living, and I wish you to live a good long while yet."

"Well, I must admit it is a very pleasant assurance that you are not tired of my company, but I may tax your patience yet. We never know how much trouble we are going to be before we are done. Well good night, Swenson. If I need you during the night I will strike the bell."

"Good night, Doctor."

Coming out of the hall he met the bulky form of Aunt Dinah.

"Say, Marse Swenson, how you think de Doctor is comin' 'long?"

"He is all right, Dinah."

"Come out here, Marse Swenson, and I'll show you sumpin'."

"Well, what is it?"

"You hea' sumpin' up dat tree?"

"I hear some birds snickering and chirping. Well?"

"Wal, dem debetis cum back. Dat fool nigger, Joe, he bin chasin' dem all evenin' throwin' sticks at dem, an' when he's done, back dey cum. I tell you, Marse Swenson, dem debetis callin' fo' somebody."

"Maybe they got a call for you, Aunty?"

"Lawd a massy! what makes you talk like dat? I ain't ailin'," and the white part of Dinah's eyes fairly rolled around.

"But I will tell you Dinah what I think. There are some berries or bugs or something the birds like around the house, and they are going to taste it out before they leave, that's my belief. Don't you go fooling around here and tell Mrs. Long or the Doctor any fool stories. If you do I will see to it that you will be the first nigger sold from the place this fall."

"Lawd a massy, Marse Swenson, I'll keep mum lak a daid turkey. Scuse me, Marse, scuse dis po' ole good-fo' nuthin' nigger."

"Well, don't you say anything to the other hands either."

"Deed I won't. Deed no."

But the bird was out. There were glances from frightened eyes, whimpers, communications and comments of some mysterious nature, and all revolved around old stupid Joe and the few remarks that he made on the bird chase.

"An' dey is debetis?"

"Dats what Dinah sez."

"An' dey is callin' someun?"

"Lawd, dey jus' been a callin' an' a callin' all de evenin'."

"Someun goin' to die shore."

"Shore's yo' bawn."

"Yas, dey is jus' gwine to fetch yo' ole good fur nuttin niggers, sittin' here and telling fool stories fur niggers dat ought to be asleep." And old Dinah fairly stampeded the poor superstitious, already scared, negroes with her sudden presence.

"Lawd, how you scared me, Sis Armstrong."

"I'se gwine to skeer yer fool mouth till it shets up. Marse Swenson ses he's gwine to sell de fust nigger dat sez one word 'bout dem birds. I say, shet up all yow niggers, yew. Shet up dis blessed minnit. D'ye hear me?"



Aunt Dinah talked as though she had her small children around her once more.

She was respected because of her standing in the big house, and all choice morsels of gossip came through Aunt Dinah. It was very seldom that she gave such imperative energetic orders, and consternation and silence reigned immediately.

In this enlightened age we hear more of "lucky days," "lucky numbers," "bad signs," than ever before. Superstition seems to be rampant at home, while at the same time we send missionaries and Bibles to convert the superstitious (?) heathens. A few doses of our own medicine here at home would not be out of the way. And yet there are coincidences in life that seem to verify the superstitious claims that are set up from time to time. And all the explanations or coincidences in the world could not convince the negroes on Dr. Long's plantation that the jaybirds were not a bad omen. How could they believe otherwise?

Early next morning Mrs. Long was called away to visit a sick friend. She had learned a little about sickness and the use of medicines from the Doctor, and the two men were left sitting at the breakfast table conversing about the work on the plantation, when Dr. Long had a sudden pain in the chest. The tightness and shortness of breath warned him



that something was wrong; then the hemorrhage came.

"Help me to lie down on the lounge," he gasped. "Water! Mrs. L—o—n—g, send—" he groped about for Swenson's hand while Swenson called for Dinah to assist. The blood was filling his mouth, nose and throat. He fixed his eyes on Swenson, while Swenson gave orders to send for Mrs. Long immediately. His grip tightened on Swenson's hand, a few spasmodic jerks and he lost consciousness. The red blood continued to flow, the pulse and heart pulsated feebly, when Mrs. Long—breathless from her fast riding, burst into the room and fell on her knees beside the lounge. But why try to describe the scene, or the intonation with which she repeated over and over again:

"So you were not even granted the privilege of holding my hand while passing through the valley of death.

"My dear, my noble, my precious Ed. I could not even hold your hand. Oh, why couldn't I have stayed with you and held your hand, at least. That was your last, your only wish. Only to hold my hand!"

Swenson was standing at the window, looking for the neighbors to arrive, that he had sent for. He hardly knew whether to try to console her or not. He heard as one in a dream—how Dinah tried to tell her that Swenson had held Dr. Long's hand, and

ministered to him to the last, but she heard not and answered not. The neighbors arrived, the funeral was discussed, the time of the funeral set; but she paid no attention to anything. Swenson had to attend to all details. There was a private burial place on the plantation. Under one of the great liveoaks the grave was dug by the slaves.

Old Burns remarked to the hands working under him:

“Tell ye what, boys, des lak I’s e diggin’ my own grave.”

“It shore is,” they all echoed back.

The genuine deep grief of the slaves, the sympathy and help offered by kind neighbors, the impressive, costly funeral conducted by Reverend Gillespie, and among all, the central figure, the widow, whose grief seemed to have turned her to stone, all were touching in the extreme. But no grief was more loud and violent than Aunt Dinah’s. She had nursed him and cared for him and cooked for him, and now he was dead and gone. She was almost reckless with her grief when she met Swenson in the hall after the funeral, in the twilight.

“What did I tell you, Marse Swenson? What did I tell you las’ night?”

“Yes, Dinah. Do you remember what I told you

about saying anything to Mrs. Long about those birds? Do you hear? Not one word!"

"Yas, sah."

But it seemed to him that every hand on the plantation pointed their finger at him behind his back and whispered:

"I TOLD YOU SO."

## CHAPTER VII

### A NEW ORDER OF THINGS

In his farewell address, delivered February 16, 1846, President Jones declared that "The Republic of Texas is no more." But he thought—and the majority with him—it was better to be a part of the great American Union than to remain independent. Then followed the war with Mexico in which eight thousand soldiers from Texas participated, which was a far greater number than was furnished by any other State. The population of Texas by this time had increased to about 100,000 white people, besides 35,000 slaves. The immigration from the North continued. Germans moved into the new State in great numbers. Swenson and Palm discussed the outlook.

"Why can't we induce our folks to come over and settle here just as well as these Germans?" Swenson wondered.

"Well, I know of one girl I would like to see immigrate," said Palm.

"Oh, you mean Captain Alms' daughter?"

"Yes, but how is a man going to manage it so as to offer a refined young lady of good family a decent home in these wild little towns?"

"I guess you better move to Austin and get in with the Governor and politicians. Then you will be near where the style and the big folks congregate. But I am thinking of Uncle Anders with his six boys! and Uncle Gustav with his growing family; why can't we help them to come over? There is that land alongside of the Long Plantation. They could settle on that and improve it."

"Have you had any letter from Mrs. Long lately?"

"Yes, about one every month."

"And how is the courtship progressing?"

"Courtship?"

"Yes, don't you know that they all say you had it planned long before Dr. Long died?"

"And Mrs. Long, of course, conspired with me while her husband lived? Is that so?"

"Yes, that's why you went there as overseer."

Swenson chuckled!

"I don't believe these people believe the story themselves. There is not a fourpenny nail for a peg to hang any such rumor on. I never spoke to her after the Doctor's death, except in the presence of others. She stayed with others, or neighbors came and stayed

with her until she went to Tennessee. It is ridiculous."

"But they think it a good and proper match."

"Yes, and if the match comes off, *they* would be ready to hang me for it, next day."

"But she ought to be good enough for you."

"Heaven knows she is and more too. She is a pure, good, refined woman, way above any scandal."

"But wouldn't you marry her if you had a chance?"

"Are you her spokesman?"

"I only know what she writes to others. She seems to have a high opinion of you, Swenson."

"And 'presto,' there is a love match made out of it."

"Well, rumor is often the forerunner of the real thing."

"Well I'm getting tired of the rumor. I'm glad Mrs. Long is out of harm's way."

"But you cannot prevent some rumor from reaching her. I warn you, Swenson, from as much as squinting out of the corner of one eye, at any young girl around here, if you want a chance with her. Let them write her that you are lonesome, with a wistful look on your face; that you seldom smile, and mingle very little with other people. Then they cannot help adding: "He seems to be longing for you."



“ ‘They!’ ‘them!’ Oh, you are impossible, Palm, and I will be irritated if this keeps on. Go to bed and let *them* alone for a few hours.”

“You are not offended at me, Swenson?”

“No, but I am almost mad at *them*. Why can’t they let people alone?”

While Palm went to bed, Swenson went to his room. He sat down at his desk, writing and making entries and memoranda. Then he pulled out a letter of recent date and started to read it for the third time.

“My dear Swenson:

“More than six months have passed since I left Texas to visit my cousin, Miss McCready. The visit has done me good—more than I can tell you. When I recovered from the great sorrow that, like a hard blow, almost stunned me, I found myself unbalanced, listless, and without any interest in life. This apathy to my duties lasted for months after I got here. Hence my short letters and little interest in the plantation.

“After my awakening—as I call it—I am seeing things in a different light. I have seemed ungrateful, I am afraid, to my friends, who evidenced all the sympathy one human could show another. Allow me to thank you for your thoughtfulness and care, outside of your regular duties. No relative could have done more, or have done it better. I know now, and

realize that you held the hand of the Doctor in his last moments. It seems to me that you did that act for me, in my stead. That all these sad duties and changes, as a result of the Doctor's death, were handled with so small inconvenience to myself, I see now it was on account of your care, faithfulness, and promptness. I wish I could repay you in some way.

"My dear Swenson, do you remember the young girl, Cora McCready, who stayed with us two years ago? She went back to Tennessee a short while before you came to the place as overseer. It is with her I am staying most of my time. She is unmarried yet. No suitor has found favor with her yet. I think I know that she liked you two years ago. What she thinks or feels today I do not know.

"But why could you not marry my cousin, rent the plantation and 'live happy ever after.' You could let me have my rooms and I could go and come like I wanted. I like to see people around me happy. And to make you both happy would be my best way of repaying you. It will soon be time to make some arrangement about the plantation for the coming year. Let me hear from you soon.

"Your mischievous friend,

"JEANETTE LONG."

Swenson mused on the contents of the letter long and intently. It was past midnight, but there was

no sleep for him. He might as well have it out now as later on. It was nine months from the death of the Doctor, it was true, but something had to be done. So he wrote an answer:

“Dear Madam:

“The interesting letter I received from you May 26th, proved to me beyond a doubt that you are getting to be your own self again. What a joy and satisfaction this is to us all down here you can hardly imagine. Everything is in fine shape on the plantation. Health is good, and the weather almost ideal for crops and work. I hope this will interest you again and cause you to come down and see about things once more, like you used to. Do what I may, it is a one-sided affair for one man to care for all the details in and outside the house. It is true, you have a good loyal set of servants and Dinah is an excellent cook, but I can see that she needs the hands and eyes of the mistress to guide her.

“What you say about Miss Cora McCready strikes me as a faint dream, that I met her somewhere, but what you said about marriage is an impossibility. I must know the woman I marry. I cannot trust the welfare of two lives in the hands of a third party. This would be mischief indeed. Miss McCready is no doubt an excellent woman, but *you* stand first in

my mind as a model for what a good woman should and can be.

“Now I have said it! I have said, what I hardly dared to admit to myself. But this is the silent, deep and strong desire of my life from day to day.

“Can’t you see that my silence, my reverence, my anxiety for your welfare, my effort to shield you from all embarrassment, had as a main-spring my silent worship of you. I enjoyed being in your home, in your presence, in yours and Dr. Long’s service. It was happiness to me to see you happy, and you know that not one word or act from me marred your happiness. And, when your husband was dead, whom we both loved so well, I did not do anything that could embarrass you. A coarse nature would have done it, but I have tried to be worthy of your respect—I don’t dare to say love yet. Let me serve you, worship you, adore you, but don’t try to force any fetters on me in addition to those I voluntarily wear.

“Understand, my dear, beloved Mrs. Long, that if you but say one word of silence on this subject, I will not embarrass you with a second communication like this. But we need you on the plantation.

“Your faithful servant,

“S. M. SWENSON.”

Palm had moved to La Grange and transferred the holdings of the Columbus store partnership to that town, where he soon became postmaster for a term of years. He spent all his leisure time in reading and his profits in buying books. He read and studied continually, and put success in business in second place. The Palm brothers in Sweden—Anders and Gustav—were afraid of the journey to such an out of the way place as Texas. Besides, was not there a bloody war going on with Mexico? And a revolution of government every ten years or so? What would come next? Perhaps they would all be beheaded some of these days? No, let well enough alone. “A bird in hand is better than ten in the tall timber.” Why couldn’t Palm and Swenson come home on a visit. Perhaps then they might change their mind and go to Texas with them. But they must talk it over with them first, etc.

“I know I will have to go home and see them,” said Swenson. “It is a journey full of danger and hardship to them. And the future seems uncertain. I don’t blame them. Next spring I will try to go home and come back in the fall. I think young Dyer can manage the place for a few months during summer and fall.”

Then came a letter from Mrs. Long again:

“My dear Swenson:

“Your answer to my letter of May 26th at hand. Glad to hear you are all well, and that weather and season are favorable, but sorry to hear that you need a head in the house so bad, and that I was only brewing mischief. I am glad to say Cora does not know anything about my proposition, and if you are not sorry, no harm is done, I hope.

“Your declaration of reverence and worship was not a surprise exactly. Don’t you know your whole action, your words and sentiments have testified to that fact. But I respect you from the depths of my heart, and I admire you and your staunch character.

“You know there will never be peace for a young widow until she is ‘taken care of’ and I am overrun with young sapheads here that have no discretion. I am tired of it. The letters from some matrimonial candidates in Texas are of the same stripe. And they threaten to come up here and marry me willy nilly.

“My dear Swenson, you know that a second marriage can never be as romantic as the first, but when I look over my suitors, there is no one that I trust, respect, and look up to like you. If you are satisfied with what I can give of such affections, I am your beloved,

“JEANETTE LONG.”



"P. S.—Miss McCready and I will arrive in Houston sometime in the latter part of September. Shepherd will let you know."

"Wonder what's got in de haid of Marse Swenson," confided Dinah to Burns one evening. "He talks 'bout paintin' the house inside and outside, an' a paperin', an' a clarin' up, and a plantin' 'in de garden, and fixin' de fence and de carrage, and puttin' gravel on de walks, and a fixing de gates. W'at you think, Brer Burns?"

Burns scratched his kinky head.

"Deed, Sis Armstrong, I dunno what is up. Mebbe the Mis'tes comin' back."

"Jes whut I sez, but who is commin' wid her, is what I lak to know?"

"Do you think she is gwine ter bring a husband?"

"Cose I think. A purty lady lak Mis'tes is gwine ter hab a husban'."

"I hope tew goodness he will be a good un."

"Jess what I sez too."

Swenson coaxed, bribed, scolded and praised his hands alternately, and promised them unheard of things in reward for a good work done on the plantation. The crop was to be laid by early, then a wholesale clean-up of the negro quarters was to take place. Whitewashing was planned on a large scale.

A general overhauling was to be inaugurated. Swenson's energy and good will was infectuous.

Down at Mrs. Long's famous boarding house where the "elite" congregated, Swenson's activities were discussed.

"Who is Mrs. Long going to marry?" wondered a wealthy planter's son, who was a rejected suitor.

"They say she will be home soon with her new husband."

"Swenson is overhauling the place from top to bottom," said one.

"He thought that he was going to draw the lucky bean, but she lit out before he got a chance to propose."

"Where does he come from anyhow?"

"Comes from Scandinavia."

"Where is that?"

"Don't you know, Sweden?"

"It is up in the Artics where they have the midnight sun for three months in summer."

"Well, I declare!"

"And the Norsemen came here, they claim, and discovered America long before Columbus had sense enough to know his daddy's name."

"Great people, hey?"

"Sure thing. They will go anywhere, and they will stick too. Stick like sin."

"Swenson is a sticker all right. They say he is going to marry her, when she comes back."

"I hope not. He ought to know his place. She belongs to one of our best families."

General Sam Houston who had listened in silence, broke in:

"Take it from me, ladies and gentlemen, Swenson is the lucky one. I'll bet my old gray hat on it. You knew Dr. Long. He was as fine a man as God ever made. And I declare unto God, Swenson is every bit his equal. I know what I am talking about. That young man has got a head on his shoulders, and mark my word, he will be a millionaire some day, when some of you are only renters and plow your corn with a lazy, long-eared mule. Swede or no Swede, you will see if that isn't the d—d truth. Beg your pardon, ladies, I did not mean to swear."

"Queer old chap, Sam is," observed two of the guests as they rode homeward. "He talks like a patriot by the yards, then first thing, when a foreigner comes along he takes up with him like an equal."

"Well, aren't we all foreigners? You weren't born in Texas. We need all the good people we can get. Look how the Germans are coming."

"Well perhaps you are right, but don't you think old Sam was a little bit tipsy?"

"Well, that is nothing new."

## CHAPTER VIII

### COMING HOME

Early in September another letter arrived. Among other communications, it read:

“I think we will arrive at Houston about September 20th. I am fairly hungering for my Southland, the plantation and home life, the old hands, and not least for you, my dear friend. It will be like arriving in port after a long and stormy voyage. I had no idea what inconveniences a lone woman would have to put up with, and I have often wondered how Mrs. Long can get along like she does. Miss McCready can not come with me this fall, but will visit us next spring and stay all summer. I have arranged to travel with the Jenkins down to New Orleans then it will not take long to get to Houston, where you will meet me with the carriage. After a quiet ceremony we will come home husband and wife. I trust you have arranged everything at home. Invite a few old friends for our first dinner on the plantation. But I trust you to arrange tactfully what is appropriate.

“Arrange and Prepare!”

Swenson slept and dreamed, worked and planned with nothing else in sight. The cotton picking was in full swing, but he managed to keep his hands well up with the work, all with the hope and promise that they should have half a week off for holiday when the Mistress came home. Aunt Dinah bustled around in the house and kitchen. Old Joe hoed, raked, burned brush, and was initiated into the plans for the decoration that was to take place.

Rev. Gillespie was to hold a short welcome speech. Then old Burns was rehearsed so he could say his speech. The Hunter, Burton, Willard, and Williams families were invited for a “little dinner.” At the dinner Col. Williams was to give an after-dinner speech, and Swenson thought it an appropriate moment to introduce himself and his wife and thus take his stand in the community.

Oh yes, everything was well planned. Everything except the big rainy spell that set in with “Marse” Swenson’s departure for Houston and continued with one or two good showers a day when they returned. The plantation shone and glistened in the sun that peeped out for a few hours between showers. The negroes were lined up on both sides of the road when the mud-bespattered carriage rolled up the hill where

the triumphal archway was erected, all glistening in its fresh attire of Southern smilax.

Old Burns made his speech before Swenson and "Mist'ess" got out of the carriage. Aunt Dinah was tickled to death to get in a word of welcome. The young element, thirty in number, and of all shades, and various ages, made a particular ringing welcome:

"Glad to see you home,  
Glad to see you come  
Home again, home again, home again."

Mrs. Swenson beamed her rare sweet smile on the gay crowd, and for the thirtieth time they roared:

"Glad to see you home—"

Palm was there in his Prince Albert, silk hat and cane in hand, bowing and smiling. But the minister and all neighbors were frightened away by the black clouds and ominous low thundering that promised another shower in a little while.

On the piazza Swenson and his wife turned to the servants who, without exception now joined in the refrain:

"Glad to see you home"—

The Mistress of the plantation told them all how truly glad she was to be back among them once more, and how she appreciated their welcome. "I know," she concluded, "that you have one of the best masters



in the whole Brazos bottom, and I have one of the best husbands."

Swenson made his inauguration speech in something like the following language:

"My truly faithful servants:

"I bring back to you today your beloved 'Mis'tess' whom we have all missed so much, and who is also my 'Mistress' now. You have all been willing hands at your work and we will make the week-end one grand holiday. Every grown person will get a bright silver dollar, every boy or girl working in the field will get half a dollar, and every child, twenty-five cents. Burns will give them to you. Now run along and take care of that barbecued meat and sweet potatoes before the next shower comes along." And the hilarious crowd broke out again:

"Glad to see you home again," before they went pell mell for the barbecued meat and "taters."

The three white persons went in the big dining room where Dinah had set the table for two dozen people.

The room was getting dark with the gathering rainstorm and dark clouds on the outside.

"Well it can't be helped," sighed Swenson. "I have planned and done my best, but the rain is beyond my control."

His wife caught his hands, "I think you have done

wonders, my dear. Do you know it seems to me like a new place, outside and inside? Where did you get all the money from besides the spending money you sent me so freely?"

Swenson smiled. "I guess I can show it satisfactorily in the books."

"I would just as soon have a cozy home-coming like this as the big one you had planned. But we will have a big dinner some day instead of this."

Outside the rain splashed against the window panes while Dinah served the big dishes "fit to set before the king" for which she had hoped, so much, to win praise.

"Laws a massy," she said to herself when the rain poured down, "dis ole nigger jus' stuck up and maybe de good Lawd jus' hab to send some tribulashun to keep me down."

But in the dining room the spirit was just as animated as if the table had been full of guests.

"I declare," exclaimed the newly wedded Mrs. Swenson for the third time, "I enjoy this quiet home-coming better than anything else you could have planned."

"Then the event is a grand success," complimented the courteous Palm.

\* \* \* \* \*

The old plantation life jogged along in the old

channels again. Burns got promoted to overseer, and felt highly elated and important. The promised big dinner with the Rev. Gillespie's after-dinner speech, and Swenson's reply came off in great style, and Aunt Dinah's vanity and pride over the good "vittels" she was able to serve, received a new encouragement. Wasn't the turkey done to perfection, and the twelve cakes and fifteen pies one grand success? And didn't she hear Mrs. Higgins say to Mrs. Swenson: "These old Tennessee cooks are hard to beat. As long as you have Aunt Dinah in the kitchen, Mrs. Swenson, you can give better dinners than any of us."

"Lawd a massy," Dinah related to her wondering gasping crowd of underlings, "didn't I feel like split-tin', and 'Mist'ess' replying, sez she, 'It seems like I hab more blessins den I deserves.'"

Peace and prosperity were evident on all sides in the new State. The war was not conducted on Texas soil. Generals Scott and Taylor's campaign in Mexico was one grand strategic success, and there could be but one result: an early honorable peace that would be conclusive and lasting. The administration of Governor Henderson—the first Governor of Texas—was vigorous and efficient, and all indications pointed to an era of unusual progress for the future.

The young Swensons (he was about thirty years old then) went out to the grave under the great liveoak.

There was a garden sofa, a tool box containing rake and hoe, and very often they visited the grave and placed flowers where rested the body of the kindly friend and husband. Lying high up, as it did, where the bottoms broke into timber, from it one had a fine view over the landscape. It was springtime once more. The quails called "Bob White" in the thickets, the wild dove was cooing and wooing, the mocking birds were singing day and night like their throats were going to burst, and over from the fields came the voices singing with energy and precision:

"Glad to see you home."

Swenson smiled: "So they have not forgotten that old rhyme?"

She also smiled: "Do you know, that rhyme as you call it, and the rhythm with which they rendered it that evening, made me feel more at home than anything else.' "

"No doubt," he said dreamily. Then turning to her: "How about another fellow's home place. It is eleven years since I left that place over in the old country."

She was all sympathy and attention.

"Yes, dear, you must feel lonesome sometimes. I know how you feel. As long as any of our dear ones are living in a far off place our thoughts and

longings will go out to them. Why don't you go home and see them?"

Then Swenson confided to her his observations and conclusions.

"You see this constant immigration? The Germans are coming in ever increasing number year after year. Why could not my people emigrate and settle here. There is the fertile land right along side of us. All that is needed is strong willing hands. And my people are a hard-working race."

"Well, go over and bring them here, your parents and all."

"Will you go with me?"

"I don't think it would be right to burden you with my company when you would have a whole company of others to tend to, besides, Cora is coming to spend the summer with me. If you can get young Dyer—of whom you have spoken—as an overseer, I think we will make it out all right here at home."

"One more word: do you think you could tolerate my people? They are a plain uneducated people in many ways, very set in their views and habits, but industrious. If my old mother were to come over here I am afraid she would lord over me yet, and want to set up looms and spinning wheels in every room. She is an expert in making cloth and weaving rugs and carpets, that is her ruling passion."

“Well we will fix up some suitable place for her loom.”

“Yes dear, but she wants more than that. She wants to have hired girls to card, to spin, and work the loom, then she wants expositions to compete with others, and carry off the prizes. Can you create all that?”

“I thought you said she was uneducated?”

“Yes, to a certain extent, perhaps.”

“People who can do such things are not uneducated, Swenson. You bring them over and I will guarantee to get along with them. Now I think I understand why you are such an ambitious man. You always wanted to carry off the prize, too.”

“Yes, especially, when you were the prize.”

So it was decided that Swenson was to go home to visit his folks in April. From the war field came the cheering news of the fall of Vera Cruz and San Juan de Ullua in March of 1847. The Mexican faction and the clergy were hostile to the Mexican government, because of the tribute levied on the churches for the continuance of the war. Consequently Swenson could depart without any fear of disturbance to his home and property. Besides there was Palm to be sent for in case of emergency. He would keep him posted on political and State news. Young Dyer was secured as overseer, and, on his journey to Houston, Swenson



sought an interview with the renowned general and statesman, Houston.

"General," he said, "I am on my way to Sweden to induce my countrymen to come here and help to settle these wide prairies. I will return in the fall again if nothing happens. But in my absence, General, if anything should happen to my family and they need the helping hand of a friend, and you are near enough to render them assistance, will you help them if you can?"

"You can be d—d sure I will. Go and bring 150 families back with you. We need them here. If I were president of the Republic (I mean Texas) I would send you home as ambassador."

"Thank you General."

Then there was B. A. Shepherd, the Houston banker, who proved a life-long and true friend to Swenson.

"Going to Europe, Swenson?"

"Yes, going home to see my folks."

"Why don't you take your wife along? Had a falling out?"

"No, everything is alright at home. I guess you know my wife's cousin is coming to spend the summer here. I intend to go home and try to induce my folks to come out here and settle down. But if any urgent message need to be sent to me, will you

do your best to send it? If we only had a telegraph across the sea then I could get a message in a few hours."

"Well, I am afraid, Swenson, it will be many a day before it is accomplished, but it will come some day. Good luck to you, Swenson."

So he traveled on the long and tedious journey from Houston to Galveston by the old steamer "Reliance," from Galveston to New Orleans with the "Stephen F. Austin," and from New Orleans to St. Louis with the palatial packet steamer that plied the great Mississippi River in such style. The comparatively advanced civilization and comforts of life appealed strongly to Swenson's mind when he compared it with the rude mode of travel in Texas. The sugar plantations with their great refineries and colonial mansions evoked his admiration. And the refined, well-to-do planters with their families who traveled the water route of which they all were so proud, and the luxurious steamers where they enjoyed all that money and service could produce in those days, made a favorable impression on him that lingered in his memory for years, and perhaps influenced him in later years when he sought to change his investments. The journey by stage to Chicago and by railway to New York, all were interesting in the extreme.

It was interesting to meet Pearson, now a captain in the army.

"Oh, I knew you would come out all right, Swenson," he said, when Swenson had related his nine years' experience in the Lone Star State. And so you have married a beautiful, refined, and rich young widow. Allow me to offer my warmest congratulations. I hope she is as good as she is rich and refined."

"She is a good, true, pure and dependable wife. It has taken all the grit I possess to prove myself worthy of her."

"Well such discipline does a young man good. If you want to possess you must deny yourself. You can't have the cake and eat it at the same time. But what makes you break off your honeymoon life like this?"

Swenson explained the plans and wound up with a glowing perspective of the new State. "I tell you, Captain, if you have money to invest, there is the place that will make your money grow. If you are called out with your men in this war and have to travel through Texas, keep your eyes open and see for yourself. It is only a few months ago that I bought half a league of land up on Brushy Creek, some twenty-five miles from Austin. It was sold to satisfy creditors—sold for a small sum, but it will be worth money some day. Do you know that a gov-

ernment post ranger gets a league of land for a year's service, and sometimes they don't even look up their headrights, and drive the claimstakes. You can buy their certificate for a pair of boots or a horse, perhaps. They don't see any value in land, but it will be worth something in the future. And I intend to see if I can not induce my folks to come over here and tackle such land, put it in cultivation, and make it valuable."

"I believe you were cut out for a statesman, Swenson, just so you could have peace and develop things to your heart's content. Don't you think you could invest for me just as good as I could myself?"

"When I come back I can and will do it with pleasure for an old friend."

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There was a sailing vessel ready for Gothenburg, Sweden, and Swenson had to cut his visit short if he wanted to sail immediately. So the two friends separated only to meet again under other circumstances later in life.

The seven weeks' sailing across the Atlantic were pretty much like all other voyages at that period and the home-coming, when the first contours appeared, filled Swenson's mind and heart with all the uninterpretable feelings that enthuse Swedish-American

visitors when they, unable to control their emotions, with tearful eyes and shaking voices sing:

“Oh land, our land, our father’s land,” or

“I hail thee most beautiful land in the world.

“I wish to live, I wish to die in northland.”

Who can blame the foreign-born neutralized citizen for having a tender, peculiar feeling for the place where his old home was, and where his cradle rocked, and where, perhaps, old parents live? And who can blame him for being overcome by his feelings when he visits the old country? Later when he returns again to his adopted land after having compared conditions in the two countries,—congratulating himself on being a citizen of the “Stars and Stripes”—it is with a similar, but much prouder feeling, he greets the Goddess of Liberty welcoming the worthy emigrants to this shore. But what other than a barbaric government would condemn a person for these uncontrollable feelings, and who but a thoughtless one would want to uproot and forbid these noble and tender sentiments? It is the man who leaves the Fatherland as an enemy that turns out the erratic socialist or the dangerous anarchist in this country. But give me the man who can love and cherish passionately a little bit of blue sky, the tall timber and small lakes, the poor little huts, and the meager food, divided with loved relations during long hard days of



labor with scant pay: give us that kind of man and we have the stuff of which good reliable home-making people are built. Long may their tribe increase. They have helped to create a garden out of the wilderness, and have no apology to offer for being so bold as to remain here.

And it would be a poor American who did not want to know something about his ancestors, their birth-place, their mode of living; to hear about the big trees underneath which his parents played as children, the houses wherein they were born, the conditions under which their characters were moulded, and which inherent sentiments—to a certain extent—he is laboring under today. We doubt very much if he can resist the inclination to wish that he could go there some day and worship. If he doesn't feel like that, sometimes, he or she is not normal. Let this be an explanation of the hyphenated citizen's sentiment on this question.

Swenson could not help but contrast the government kept roads in Sweden to the unimproved black land roads in Texas. The small well-tilled fields there, and the masses of laboring people who did not have a home—to Texas conditions. There was much that was good and bad on each side, but he could not help but wish that some of these patient people could get a chance in Texas. Under these reflections



the home parish was reached. The town where "Lasse" lived and conducted his business was passed. The old parish church where he had been "confirmed" hove in sight. The home place in Lattarp appeared and in a few minutes he was holding the old mother, the dominating "Margret on Lattarp"—in his arms.

"Good God is it really you Swen?" she was saying for the third time. "Who would have known you, brown and changed like you are?" They all crowded around him half shy, half curious to know more about this sudden appearance. Old Swen Israelson, his father, with his selfcontrol was not going to be unbalanced by this unexpected event. He sat at his accustomed place at the head of the table and the son had to look around and step over to the "high seat," take his hand, press it to his lips. He did it in such a dignified reverential manner that the hard face broke in a multitude of wrinkles and quivered as he said: "You ran away without my blessing, Swen, you will have to prove worthy of it and earn it before you can get it back."

Then the unexpected happened. Before the old man realized what was going on, the son was on his knees, and in a penitent voice said: "Father, I know I did wrong, but forgive me."

The stern old father was much too surprised to make any long speech: "The Lord bless thee and

keep thee"—he faltered—"The Lord let his face shine on thee and be merciful. May the Lord turn his face towards thee and give thee his eternal peace. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Then Swenson knew that everything was all right.

The midsummer of the 24th of June was in its glory. The young people were decorating the May pole once more. The days seemed to reach, one into the other—a little twilight at midnight under which you could easily read the print in a book. The plays, folk dances, and hilarious midsummer spirit were in evidence everywhere. It is a memory from childhood that will linger with a foreigner a lifetime.

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Anders Palm in Besthult gave a big dinner in honor of the celebrated guest—his sister's son. There were Swen and "Margret on Lattarp," Gustav, and Johannes Palm, with their families and kinsfolks, friends, and neighbors a plenty. The five boys of Anders Palm frisked about, out and in, curious and inquisitive. Together with their schoolmate August Forsgard whose father—a representative in the "Riksdag" of Stockholm—also were present at the great dinner, they had their private conference not so far away, so they could be on hand when the good things

were distributed, or something remarkable was said or done.

"Tell you what, August, father and Uncle Gustav may go back with Uncle Swenson," said one of the Anders Palm boys.

"Then I'll go with you," was the prompt reply.

"No you can't go 'cause your papa isn't going."

"I'll bet you I'll get his permission. But let's hear what they are saying at the table."

"Margret on Lattarp" was speaking to her son, old Swen sitting silent as usual. Well I hope I'll get the estate you promised me, Swen."

"Yes, mother, if you'll go back with me, we will share the estate with you, my wife sent that message along with me."

"Your wife? I thought you owned the place?"

"Well she runs me like you run Lattarp and everything there, mother."

A hilarious merriment was the result of this reply.

"Can she speak Swedish?" the old lady inquired, without losing her equilibrium.

"No, mother."

"Well who will I have to speak to then?"

"You will learn English, of course."

Now it was "Margret's" turn to laugh loud and long. "No, my boy, never in the lifetime of this

king. But tell us, Swen, how many slaves have you got?"

"About forty."

"Good God! And wouldn't they make slaves of us and sell us if we go there?"

"No they wouldn't."

"How do you know?"

"Because no white people are used as slaves."

"And you buy and sell slaves like horses or cows?"

"No, we hardly ever sell a slave. And seldom buy any. We respect family ties and value a good faithful servant as much as you do here at home."

"And how many acres have you got in field, Swenson?"

"About five hundred."

"And what kind of money?"

"Will you lend me a clean plate, Aunt Anna?"

Swenson put on the plate a twenty dollar gold piece, one ten dollar, one five, a silver dollar, a fifty cent, twenty-five, a dime, and a nickel and let the plate pass around the table. Such an exhibit was not seen every day in the parish, and left an impression on the young people that they remembered for the rest of their lives.

They plied Swenson with questions about the land, the crops, the war, the government, its stability, the Indians, and a thousand other things. Would not the

Indians come and kill them? Wouldn't drought starve them out? Wouldn't they get homesick and lonely, when they got there—cut off from all relatives and old friends? But the greatest of all obstacles was the risk involved—selling all things and risking it all on one single undertaking. If it proved a failure, all was lost. Then there was that long tedious journey on a sailing vessel with women and children, sea sickness and cares—conditions quite different from a young man's, who traveled by himself and had only himself to take care of. Two boys had recently been born into the families of Anders and Gustav Palm. It was like tearing the roof down over their heads, to start emigrating now.

In vain did Swenson argue. In vain did he describe the fine land with the clear water in Brushy Creek. What did they care for clear water? Didn't they have whole lakes full of clear water at home? Swenson felt his power of persuasion waning. They were overpowering him, and bringing his arguments to naught. Instead of the hard-working less fortunate kinsfolks looking up to him as a benefactor who wanted to help them, he felt they considered themselves well off, and almost pitied him who had to go back again to such uncivilized conditions. He felt like despairing. One of the Anders boys—a chunky, ruddy faced boy, who with eager features watched how

the arguments were balancing—had come up behind his chair, and listened intently.

Swenson caught hold of the young fellow's hand and fondled it for a moment. "Say, Aunt Anna," he said, "Can't you let me take this young man along and make a successful man of him?"

But Aunt Anna said, "No. She could not let August go. If they were going, better all go. If they were to stay at home, they better all stay at home."

That was the end of it.

Swenson's folks were not dissenters from the State church in Sweden. They had never been persecuted for their faith like some sects were, at that time. Religious liberty to them did not appear to be such an enviable thing as it seemed to be for others.

But there was young Annie, Swenson's youngest sister, a fair creature with rosy cheeks, a mouth like Swenson's—goodness in itself—and full of life and eagerness to get away from the spinning wheel and the loom. As Swenson was walking in the evening rays of the sun, that seemed to never want to go down—torn by his disappointment during the dinner that day—Annie stole up to him and slipped her arm under his.

"I'll go with you, Swen, if you will have me," she whispered in a pleading shy voice. "They are all big



fools, standing in their own light. It is mother that influences them. She don't want them to go. And then you know they cannot sell out right away and go. They can not arrange and be ready until next spring at the best. You know that is the time to change and move to new places. But I will stick to you, Swen, if you will have me along."

He drew her arm close under his and stroked her hand. "Of course I want you to go with me, and will gladly pay your expenses, little sister," he said, almost gratefully, "but how about mother?"

"Well I can pack my chest and steal it away some night so she won't know if she won't give her consent."

He mused a moment. "No, we will not steal away, but I'll tell you what we can do. You let that chest alone. I can buy you all that you need in Gothenburg. I want you to dress up a little like they do out in the world. The few things you want to take with you put them in my trunk. Then dress in your best, like you were going with me to Jonkoping. When we are ready to start we will tell mother that you are going with me to Texas. That it is a decided thing. Then they can bring your chest with them next spring when they are ready to emmigrate. We will leave the impression with them that we expect them to come next year. The young element is enthusiastic

and will dream about it until it comes true. I have not given up the scheme yet."

He had a private, confidential talk with Uncle Anders that left him in a very different mood when Swenson was through.

"Think about your six boys, Anders. What chance do they have in this crowded old country? In Texas they could have a farm each when they grow up. I'll do my best for you, like you were my own brother, and there is that fertile land alongside of my plantation if you want to settle near me."

The boys were made his allies by small gifts and friendly conversation.

One day when Old Swen was sitting in his "high seat" all alone in the big assembly room, young Swen and Annie entered holding each others hands.

"Father," said the son, "Annie has decided to go back with me to Texas, but we don't want to run off this time without your consent and blessing. Won't you give us your blessing?"

"Old Swen" looked up and hemmed and hawed quite a bit. "What does mother say about it?" he asked at last in his slow cautious way.

Young Swen told him their plan. "But we want your consent first, father."

"Well, you have it my children. May the Lord bless and keep you."

“Margret on Lattarp” was all bustle and forethought when Swenson was getting ready to depart again. There were rugs and carpets and fine linen table cloth that would last a lifetime, over which no king need feel ashamed, and artfully woven coverings that were worth a prize in any art exhibition. The daughter-in-law over in the far-off land should know that she had a mother-in-law who knew how to use her hands and head. Alas, if she had only known how empty-handed her own Annie was to leave the parental roof! Once, it is true, Annie wondered and wished that she could go with Swen, but mother said no, what nonsense, if we all go then of course—but alone—impossible.

The farewell from sisters and younger brother—the “Johan i Langasa,” in later years—over, Swen Israelson and wife, with Annie and young Swen, went to Jonkoping, the town from which Swen was going to depart.

What business Annie had to go along was a mystery to her sisters and brothers until she, in secret, with tears in her eyes, bade them adieu, and told them that she was not coming back.

Swenson told his mother on the way that it would be better to let Annie go with him, but the old lady would not consent. And besides she had no chest, no clothes. What was her consternation when Swenson

told her that they had all agreed that Annie should go with him.

He embraced his parents, gave the old lady a smack on her cheek, told her that she could not expect anything better from "such chips off the old block," and off they were before she had time to exercise her usual authority.

Margret had to sit down on the nearest bench. Had the world come to an end? Had her final authority ever before been contested and set aside? Was not "Old Swen" always yielding to her strong dominant and sensible will?

But even Old Swen spoke up today. "Margret," he was saying, "you can not blame the children for having some of your own determination."

Such was Swenson's *home-coming* and departure again.

## CHAPTER IX

### DEVELOPMENTS

It was hard for "Margret on Lattarp" to decide whether she should give way to her feelings of anger over her son's and daughter's unusual departure, or if she should take up the outfit of Annie's linen supply. How was the poor girl going to get along when all her clothes and the supply of linen that had been started and laid away in her chest remained at home? And if the poor thing went and married, where would she get bed sheets and bed clothes, towels, tablecloths, and matting from? So she compromised by laying by a little speech of reproof (to be used if she ever got to Texas) and fell to, on the other hand, to start one or two looms so as to complete the linen supply in Annie's chest. But my goodness, what a rebuke that heedless girl deserved! To run off in only one dress, and no linen supply!

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But Annie had never enjoyed life like she did on

this journey. True, she studied the first reader and the Blueback speller every day for several hours, but there was much to see on the voyage that was new and interesting. The climate to which she came was a warmer one than she was accustomed to, but she became readily used to it. She learned to like her refined sister-in-law from the very first.

"Is this the whole colonization company that you were going to bring over?" inquired Mrs. Swenson, after the first warm greetings had been exchanged.

"Yes, that was all I could pry loose from home," admitted Swenson. "I'll tell you, it is no easy job to start a colonization movement of the right class of people. I am afraid there are very few persons fit to undertake such a work and make it a success. I admire Stephen F. Austin today more than ever."

"But this is the first time I have known you to fail, Swenson, when you set your heart on doing anything."

"Well, I don't think I have failed entirely. They will come later."

The letters from the Old Country seemed to justify these expectations. A whole company was thinking and talking of coming out the next spring, and wanted Swenson to lay plans for them as to how and where they should colonize, if they did come.

Cora McCready had to return home before Swenson



arrived with his sister. They arrived in the fall when the October haze of Indian summer hung in the air, creating that indescribable mood or feeling that only autumn carries with it. The yellow looking corn fields with their promising yield already made and deposited in their bags of husk; the still green fields of cotton that were yielding such rich returns and promising a "top crop" in addition; the singing negroes in the field; the hazy dream-like landscape with the old Finckley estate the most prominent setting, to Swenson's eyes—all together made him feel that he was by great and overwhelming reasons attached to this grand and great country. The smoke that arose from his own chimney seemed to him prettier than any other. The "elbow-room" and sense of liberty and freedom so peculiar to the Texas climate in summer and fall, came to him with a new force and meaning, and the annexation of this splendid State to the Union seemed to him a sacred tie, whenever he thought of it, and it stood for him as a guarantee of a stable government and peaceful development for many years to come. Surely it would be no mistake to expect and plan for great developments in the near future. There was only one cloud, not bigger than a man's hand, to be sure, but he was reminded of it every time he looked at his slaves, or a group of negroes. Swente Palm's words came back to him time and again:

“They are going to be set free some day.” He had heard a whole lot of rabid abolition talk during his journey in the North, and the clashing sentiments troubled and perplexed him. In what form was the solution going to come? Was it going to be a peaceful one, or spell a new revolution? Who could tell?

To be sure the servants were overjoyed to see him back again. But there was a cloud on old Burn’s face, and a reservation in his speech that puzzled Swenson. Some grievance lay at the bottom of it he felt. It would come out in veiled words in some conversation. He could almost guess what it was.

Se he sat down and listened to young Dyer’s recapitulation of the season’s work. They had done well. Crops had never been better. Cotton would soon be gathered, and the health of the hands was good. But he had had a time of it. He had gotten more work out of the negroes than any man on the place before. The hands all thought that the old established limit for a day’s or season’s work was set for all future time, but he had learned them a few new things.

“Have you learned them to keep in a good humor at the same time,” Swenson asked.

Humor? H—ll, no.—Beg your pardon, I forgot myself. I am looking for the work to be done. They

will have to look out for the humor there is in it themselves."

"Done much whipping?"

"This is only my second raw-hide this season," he replied, brandishing a nearly new riding whip. "But I have a good 'bull snake' hanging down in the tool room. I only had to use it once."

"And that limbered up the whole crowd?"

"It sure did. You ought to have seen the young buck when I got through with him. I had to make him an example. You know, your negroes are getting spoilt, that's what they all say around here."

"And they seem to like you all right, do they?"

"Well, now, Mr. Swenson, that is going it pretty deep. I know they respect me, and that is all I care for."

Swenson sat in deep thought for a few moments. "Dyer," he said at last, "you have done splendid work in my absence. Everything is in good shape as far as I can see. The hands are not bad off. With a little easier time in the fall, they will soon pick up again. But I can always tell when a horse or negro has lost his spirit. I was always told, when a boy, not to make a horse disheartened in the beginning of a work, if you knew that it was going to take supreme efforts before you were through. I was told to reserve any harsh measure to the last

moment. To take a disheartened horse or negro, and put them through a day's work, when they are sick at heart, is like being forced to eat when your stomach is out of order. It is unnatural."

Dyer looked sober and troubled. "You don't approve of my work, then? I tell you I have worked hard to merit your praise."

"Why, of course, I appreciate it. I only wish I could praise the spirit under which it was done. But we can always learn while we are young, can't we, Dyer?"

"Yes, no doubt," admitted the proud young man. "But say, how about the mules? Do you think these rules apply to them also?"

"Well, that is apart of another story. But say, Dyer, that reminds me of an old man I met some years ago with an unusually good span of mules, which he took great pride in. Do you know what he said? 'Swenson,' he said in a confidential tone to me, 'most people don't believe it, but I have found out, that a mule likes to be petted just as much as a horse.' Now as to whipping negroes, we have for years not had anything worse than hackberry switches on this place. When any switching had to be done I always let old Burns do it. He was pretty just about it. As long as the boys would take obediently what they deserved, he was not hard on them. It was the run-away

negro that caught it. It was always this he told them: 'If you want a hard whipping, try to run away. If you want an easy one, stay and take what is coming to you.' There are more ways than one to handle niggers."

So the conference ended, but another started when Mrs Swenson was going to relate how things had been going on during Swenson's absence.

"Now, William is a perfect gentleman to ladies and white people in general, but when it comes to the slaves, he is a brute. You ought to see that poor boy Nilee—how he looks yet. He has marks from that beating to this day. And the way the poor boy 'hollered' and called for 'Mistess'! It makes me wild yet. I can hear it when ever I think of it. No such unearthly sounds have ever been heard on this place before, that I know."

"What had the boy done?"

"Oh, I guess he had been shirking in the cotton picking, and had been promised the most lively time he ever had in his whole life if he fell below his hundred and fifty. So when he heard what was doing that night, off he went. Dyer turned the dogs loose and scared the men up for a regular slave hunt. He fired his pistols right and left, and rode the horse down so he was all stove up. Oh, they had a 'coon



hunt' all right, I tell you. But let me stop right here. I don't want to live it over in my memory again."

"But the boy seems to have deserved some punishment?"

"Yes, no doubt; but not as cruel and relentless as that."

"Dyer told me he had to set an example."

"Did he confess that voluntarily himself?"

"No, I ferreted the story out of him little by little. I hope he was made to see that he did not gain as much as he lost by that act of violence."

"Why, he lost a good healthy hand for one solid week. And the week after he could only do half the work he used to. But who told you about it? Burns?"

"No one told me, but I can feel these things by sympathy and instinct when I go among the negroes. I am sorry you had to suffer these things during my absence."

"Well, that was the only unpleasant thing during the whole summer. He may have used that raw-hide switch a little too freely, but as long as they can skip away to their work, I don't mind it so much. Otherwise, we had a pleasant time. But the flogging upset Cora, all right. She will turn into a red hot abolitionist from now on."

"Well, it is the curse of the system," Swenson said. Exceptions will come down hard on the individual



sometimes, no matter what his station is. Dyer undoubtedly carried it too far. But a young, hot-headed, energetic man will forget himself sometimes. Almost all of us have the humiliating memory of some trying moment in our young days, when we misused our power, and made some one who was at our mercy, suffer most cruelly. Afterwards when we reflect on it, we feel guilty and mean. Then we can also understand the feelings of others. I have no doubt William will feel that way about it, and I will try to plant the moral of what has happened in deep soil. But come now, wifey, and look at what your old mother-in-law sent you for a wedding present, although a little late. That will create a better feeling all around."

They looked over all the linen goods packed down in his trunk, even to the socks of wool knitted by loving hands in the far off country.

"Your mother must be a genius in weaving, Swenson. I know a little about these things, but it seems to me we can never get any further than to make ducking for the hands. But how do they get time to do all these things when they have no slaves?"

"Well, they have servants who, for a small wage, work like slaves all the year around. Besides everybody works, except the nobility. Now Annie, for instance, has turned out hundreds of yards from her loom of just this kind of table birdseye."

“Well, I am going to have a regular industrial conference with Annie. If we could only raise flax here!”

“It seems to me,” observed Swenson, “that in this immigration movement from the north into the south, many industries threaten to become a lost art, not because of ignorance of the ancestors, but because of altered conditions and meager facilities. The most needful things come first. With more peace and settled conditions comes the revival of art and fancy work again.”

“Well, when your mother comes, we will put up a whole factory of spinning wheels and looms, and institute a school of industry for the young people around here. Mother Margret is going to be superintendent and adviser, and Annie will be manager. We will make the Southland hum with industry, won’t we?”

Then there was the unavoidable interview with Burns in one form or the other. Swenson chose to have it his own way. He had learned that the grievance had been discussed in the negro quarters, and that something like a committee was to lay the matter before him, assured before hand that they had his sympathy.

So when the two men were out looking over the plantation, Swenson intentionally led the way to where

Nilee was working, not far from Burns and some other hands.

"Well, boys," he said, "how are you coming along?"

Nilee grunted halfway between the squealing of a pig and the cackling of a hen, while he tried to limp to the next cotton stalk.

"Well, I hear you tried to shirk your part, Nilee, while I was away. You won't do it any more I hope?"

"Naw, 'deed not, Marse!" Nilee growled, limping worse than ever.

"Maybe you caught it a little bit too hard, Nilee," he said, "but it can't be helped now."

Nilee rolled his eyes and whined in his most pitiful tones while he pulled up his shirt and showed a still unhealed scar on his hip.

"Scuse me Marse Swenson, but dis is what hurts de most."

Swenson tried to force a smile. "I thought the leg hurt you most."

"Yas, sor."

Burns and the other fellows had straightened up and were listening. They did not understand exactly which was the safe side in the parley, but a swish of the riding quirt reminded them of their

duty. Swenson was not going to give his overseer away before the slaves.

"Come here, Burns," he said. "Dyer has done well this summer, and everything is in fine shape, the work, crop and all, except Nilee. He has got the worst of it. Some fellows only get stung when they go hunting for honey. But you have all done well, now we will take the week end for a big holiday. Give them a silver dollar each—the boys and girls fifty cents each, the children two bits. Let them all have one or two shoats and a steer for barbecue. Then we will forget our troubles and start anew.

So Dyer blew his bugle, and the whole crowd came to quarters wondering what the outcome would be. The two men walked on ahead.

"Seems to me that boy must have been laid up for a week or two the way he looks yet. You wanted to rush the work, and you lost out about the picking of one bale on account of your ambition."

"Well," admitted Dyer, "when you get wrought up you don't figure things like that out before hand. It troubled me all the time, especially when at the table with the ladies. But I could not apologize to the negroes. That would have spoiled the whole thing."

"Well, Dyer, let me give you a little friendly advice. It is not the loss of a week's work from a sick hand that hurts us most. It is when the story gets

out, and circulates up in the north, and when the story is added to and enlarged upon that the whole south is represented to be a slave abusing country from one end to the other. Let one white boss knock down his hired man for acting contrary to him, or one white man knock down his fellow man—no one inquires into it but those nearest interested; but let a white man knock down a negro in the presence of a northern man—and it is an unheard of cruelty, no matter how much deserved. That is what is hurting our cause up north. Then again, I hate to have hands sullen and full of fear and hidden anger. I wish you could see these things as I see them, Dyer.”

“Well, I have learned quite a few things lately, Mr. Swenson.”

“Then we will drop the matter right here.”

\* \* \* \* \*

A chilly November night, Mr. and Mrs. Swenson were sitting before the open fire place, where a crackling fire blazed.

“Wonder why Annie don’t come down and warm herself,” said Mrs. Swenson.

“She is used to a more frigid climate than this, and she don’t consider it cold weather at all.”

But, Swenson, let me tell you what is under consideration. I may be mistaken, but my impression is that young Dyer is ready to fall in love with Annie.”



"What makes you think so, my dear."

"Well, Swenson, don't you pride yourself on having a wonderful power of observation? Where are your eyes?"

"Admiring you, I suppose."

"But when it comes to understanding the art of love, I think a woman has the better developed instinct."

"Oh, you are just interested in a new match making again, like the one you tried to pull off between Cora and me."

But in her room Annie was writing a letter to her home folks.

"Dear father and mother:

"We arrived safely at Richmond, Texas, after a nine week's journey, and found everything pleasant and lovely at Swen's home. His wife is a wonderfully nice and good woman. Although I cannot speak much English, I felt at home right away. This is a splendid country. They are making great crops, and can ship them on the river to Galveston or New Orleans. I am sure I will like it here, and will never go back to Sweden. The young overseer is a nice fellow, and has taken me out for a ride with him, and shown me every attention that he can think of. No boy ever had as nice manners in the Old Country as young



Dyer has. He has the greatest respect for Swen. I tell you Swen is considered a real gentleman out here, which I found out myself. Swen is not only polite to rich people, but he is a really good master to his servants, and to everybody dependent on him. And he is making money, and dividing it freely with me. I get all I need. But I long to get my chest.

“When are you coming over? Mrs. Swenson tells me to thank you, mother, a thousand times for all the linen goods you sent her. The bird’s eye tablecloth you sent cannot be duplicated around here, she says. She wants you to come over, and set up and run two or three looms. Run a weaving institute and take ‘*elevs*’ you know.

“I am sure you are coming over, a whole company of you. Kind greetings to you all!

“Your loving daughter,

ANNIE.”

The war with Mexico ended in February, 1848, and when spring came around once more, a letter arrived which told the great news that Anders and Gustav Palm, with their families, six or seven hired men, three or four hired girls, Senator Forsgard’s son, and very probably “Margaret on Lattarp” were coming. They were going to start in the late spring, so as to arrive in Texas by the fall. Of this interesting coloni-

zation party, August Forsgard wrote in later years the following account:

“On the morning of November 22, 1848, a party of Swedish immigrants landed at the foot of Main street in Houston from the steamboat, *Reliance*. They had left Sweden early in July, by sailboat for Boston, thence to New York. From there they came to Texas in the schooner, *Stephen F. Austin*, and landed at Galveston, thence by steamboat up Buffalo Bayou to Houston.

“That was the only way to reach the interior of Texas. Indians and wilderness walled us in on the north. Traveling was slow in those days—only a few miles of railroad in America then, and no telegraph communication. The only transportation in Texas was by horseback, stage coach, or prairie schooners.

“The party of immigrants consisted of two families, Anders Palm, his wife and six sons, Gustav Palm, his wife and four children, and the mother of S. M. Swenson, the first Swede in Texas, also three maid servants, and six men servants, mechanics, and a boy. None of them could speak English. The Palms had a brother, Sir Swente Palm, in La Grange. S. M. Swenson, their nephew, then resided on a plantation near Richmond, Fort Bend County.

## “THE BOY” BECAME A SETTLER.

“ ‘The boy’ was the son of a well-to-do farmer of Forserum, who at that time represented the district of Jonkoping in the Swedish riksdag. The boy came to see the land, and then return, but circumstances so controlled his acts, that he did not return until the spring of 1866, and then on a visit to show his parents his wife, a daughter of the Republic of Texas, and incidentally to take in the World’s Exposition at Stockholm, and see a real king.

“S. M. Swenson had made arrangements with B. A. Shepherd to send a rider to inform him when the long expected party arrived.

“Thus some days elapsed before the prairie schooner and mules arrived, during which time we were comfortably quartered at the Washington Hotel at the foot of Main street, and nearly every man and boy in Houston visited us, and like Artemus Ward said: ‘Saw the show for nothing, and it did not cost them a cent.’ Houston has never before or since seen the like.

“The two horse wagon and harness we brought from Sweden attracted much attention. So did our large chests of clothing and implements, and also our big doublebarrel muzzle-loading shotguns that every man had brought along to defend us against the Indians,

and to kill buffaloes with—both of which were plentiful in the interior.

“I had a small rifle with percussion lock, and two ‘pepper box’ brass revolvers, curiosities here where nothing but ‘holster pistols’ were common. The ‘pepper boxes’ laid the foundation of my fortune later, when a rush was made for California gold digging.”

“The party arrived at the Swenson plantation in due and ancient form, and the men folks worked in the cotton and corn fields, and also cleared much land which was intended to be Uncle Anders plantation, but that patriarch died and was buried the first year, which sorely distressed us all.

“We had been badly shaken up by fever and ague, and at the death of ‘Uncle Anders,’ we scattered from tall timber to open grounds, some went to work in Austin County, others to LaGrange in Fayette, and later to Travis and Williamson Counties, forming the nucleus for later settlements.

“S. M. Swenson’s mother returned to Sweden and lived to the age of ninety-nine years.

“I, ‘the boy,’ returned to Houston, and got a job with B. A. Shepherd, well satisfied with my experiences in cotton picking, having the distinction of being the first white boy who had ever picked cotton in the Brazos bottom, and thus having the unusual op-

portunity to learn 'negro race characteristics'. While there I lived with Mr. Swenson and was treated as one of the family. They took pains to teach me English. Mrs. Swenson was an estimable lady."

Besides this interesting story, the old gentleman is quoted by reporters as having given them the following verbal facts: "'I am a little older than Houston. I was born 1832. The city was named in 1836.' This was the remark of G. A. Forsgard, who celebrated his eighty-first birthday yesterday (1913.) He added: 'But the city has outgrown me time and time again. When I improved and settled what is now known as the Forsgard homestead, I thought I was out of reach of the city.

"'But in a few years the city spread out and took me in. I found myself surrounded by substantial and elegant residences. I found myself in the city limits and paying city taxes. I found pleasant neighbors—and now the children of Houston are to possess the land.'"

\* \* \* \* \*

Mr. Forsgard is still living at this writing (1916), eighty-four years old, and the writer has asked for permission to publish this article.

It was an interesting group of people that arrived in early December at the plantation, the funny little Swedish wagon among the others in the caravan; the



boys and young folks burning with curiosity, and eager to investigate; the leaders of the company grave and responsible, looking after the children and the welfare of their people and goods. In the carriage drawn by the trusty old gray mares, on which the boys took their much enjoyed rides later, were "Margaret on Lattarp," and her two sisters-in-law—wives of Anders and Gustav Palm, with their smallest children.

When the carriage drove up to the residence of her son, and she found herself enclosed in his arms, with Annie hovering around, waiting her turn, and a sweet looking lady standing beside with moist eyes—evidently Swen's wife—and Swente Palm, her brother who had come over from LaGrange, the good old lady forgot her speech of reproof that she had prepared for Swen and Annie. Tears and kisses, embraces and greetings filled the air, and all ended in a delicious lunch where the first good coffee was served—so the newly arrived ladies declared—that they had tasted since they left their old home in Sweden.

But the big affair took place when the whole company, about twenty-five in all, had arrived, and after disposing of their goods and accumulation of dust and dirt, sat down to a big dinner, which Dinah, with willing hands and wondering mind, had prepared.

Swenson, who loved to do things right, at the right time, made a little speech of welcome. Swente Palm



proposed a toast; Mrs. Swenson said a few words of welcome in English. Anders and Gustav Palm told how thankful they were for all kindness, and "Grandma Margret" suddenly remembered her speech, which she had prepared long ago.

She also stood up and—taking off her spectacles—looked over the company assembled around the table. "Swen," she said in slow measured, but soft tones, "I came over here to give you and Annie a piece of my own mind for running off like you did, and to bring the poor girl's clothes and linen. But I will not say anything now. I don't blame you for wanting us all to come. You have got a good home, Swen, a nice wife—what she can do with a loom I don't know yet, but will find out by the by. I only wish father could have come with us, but his leg is very painful, and I thought best to come out here, and look around first before deciding to move. And it is always best to be careful when making new decisions, but I want to thank you for your kindness all the same. You have a good cook even if she is a black one, and your people seem to be content around you. I only wish you may all prosper and enjoy yourselves in this new country. I am the oldest one among you here, but I hope the Almighty God may hold his protecting hand over you all in this great and prosperous land, in the the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost."

It was a very simple speech, but it was the longest public speech "Margret on Lattarp" ever made, and she was almost flustered when through. Tears moistened her eyes and almost threatened to choke her voice when she thought about her people without parish church and the sacrament, without preaching in a language they could understand, and without the old-time parish school for the children. What was to become of them after all? They had risked a whole lot coming out here, to be sure. But she depended on Swen to take care of them, and when she heard him echo a soft "Amen" to her invocation, she felt more at ease, and when Mrs. Swenson, to his great astonishment caught, under a sudden impulse, one of the round-eyed, milk-and-strawberry complexioned, bashful boys, and kissed him long and loud on the rosy, clean scoured cheeks, there was great merriment. The youngster struggled in vain to get away, and finally succeeded in hiding behind his mother. To be suddenly caught, kissed, and kindly fondled by the beautiful Mrs. Swenson was an exciting occurrence which scared the boys nearly out of their wits, but which they came to secretly enjoy after a while.

The boys rode to the river on the old trusty carriage horses and came very near drowning in the Brazos, which occurrence would have cut Forsgard's age considerably, if Burns had not come to the rescue. They

planted a garden in the rich, fertile bottoms, under Swenson's direction, and put big baskets full of the finest garden truck on the banks of the Brazos, when they knew the steamboat was due to arrive. They would catch the small pigs in the great sugar casks, turn them in upright positions, with the pigs caught inside, and then "mark" them with the Swenson mark, which was great fun. They would play with the small negroes and study the primer and "blue-back speller" at stated hours. All this time the men worked, clearing the land for a new plantation.

Christmas over—so unlike the holiday feast in the Old Country—old Margaret began to inquire about the spinning wheels and looms. She had brought a quantity of yarn with her for setting up a new loom without delay, but it would not hurt to set hands to carding and spinning. Were not all these black women folks without work right now? Why not keep their hands busy? She could not get any help from the hired girls in Anders' and Gustav's families. They needed them. She and Annie examined the old remnants of looms on the place. She had conferences with the carpenter on looms. She looked over the black women critically to pick out competent hands, likely to understand the deep mysteries of warp and woof, "heedles" and reeds, band and check weaving, shuttles and threadles. To talk about figure weav-

ing, pile weaving, doublecloth, or such things, pertaining to the higher arts, she felt was useless. She tried to be reasonable and take the people as she found them. But then to get her communications and ideas into these kinky, woolly heads, why it was well nigh impossible! Ah, if she had only brought two or three girls with her as servants, that would have simplified matters, and Annie—why Annie was not interested a bit in this noble art. Things could be bought, even down to the negroes cloth, so handy, so why all this fuss? Besides, Annie could not translate all these terms in weaving satisfactorily. There were no markets or sale days in this country, nor expositions where she could take her art products and compete for a prize, and perhaps “Old Swen” was worse at home—it was all obstacles and troubles and difficulties in her way.

In vain did Swenson tell his mother that she did not need to worry and work about her looms. Who has ever seen a healthy middle-aged lady of the foreign stock sit idle and fold her hands? And if she was not needed or efforts appreciated, she knew where she was needed, and the longing to go back to the old ways of living her life, that she was accustomed to, grew to be an absorbing desire with her.

And when the news came to Swenson’s place, that Uncle Anders was sick, very sick, and when finally he

died, and was buried under the liveoaks in the private burial ground, then old Margret concluded to go home again.

“But, mother, how are you going to get home all by yourself?” Swenson asked.

“Just as if that would be harder than bossing two or three hired men and hired girls around, and have a sickly husband and a house full of boys and girls to provide food and clothes for. If I could take care of all that, I guess I can take care of myself.”

Swenson had to smile and admit: “You were always a plucky woman, mother.” So the old lady departed again, after an affectionate farewell.

It was the day after the homecoming of the newly wedded Crown Prince and the Princess of Sweden, a home-coming celebrated with great and enthusiastic ovation, when “Margret on Lattarp,” tired, dusty, and alone, came to Gothenburg, and was hailed with: “Here comes another traveler from foreign parts.”

Margret pointed her finger solemnly at the speaker: “Yes, my boy, and I have perhaps seen more of the real world than any of you.”

That “Old Swen” was glad to have his efficient wife home again, goes without saying.



## CHAPTER X

### READJUSTMENT.

“A calamity seldom comes alone,” says an old Swedish proverb. Soon after the death of “Uncle Anders” and the departure of “Old Margret,” Mrs. Swenson took a violent cold that threatened to develop into pneumonia. Then followed bleedings, and later hemorrhages of a serious character. Alarm and consternation were written on the faces of the household and relatives. Cures, remedies, medicines, and journeys were suggested without end. Sympathetic messages poured in from all quarters. Mrs. Swenson was greatly beloved by servants as well as neighbors. Her Christian character and kind temperament made her a favorite with young and old. Swenson walked like one in a stupor. Sleepless nights and worried days made him thin and prematurely old, while the fatal disease made rapid inroads on Mrs. Swenson’s strength, which had never been very great.

The desire seemed to grow with her to return to Tennessee. Perhaps the climate there would be better



for her. The Brazos bottoms have never been considered very healthy, although very fertile. But what are riches without health? The new immigrants had the malaria and chills, off and on, and wanted a healthier location. Gustav Palm made ready to move to La Grange and Swenson sought to induce the widow with her six sons to move to higher ground in Austin County. He purchased some land there for her.

Then the husband and wife talked between themselves of selling the plantation. Swenson was willing to do anything to please his wife. And in a fortnight the place was sold. Sold for a good price and on satisfactory terms to Gaston, who lived on the prairie. Sold slaves and all. What that means to kind-hearted owners and affectionate servants, let the imagination fathom. But the tears and lamentations lingered in Swenson's memory for years, and prompted him to remember the old hands after emancipation with a piece of ground each. Aunt Dinah and a couple of housemaids were to go with the master to Tennessee. And when the beautiful autumn came around again, the Swensons were on their way to Tennessee.

Annie and William Dyer were married among all these conflicting circumstances and settled down on the Brazos for awhile, before moving up on Brushy creek, where he finally located. Swenson, anxious

to see his sister and brother-in-law have a good start in life, assisted them materially.

And so the center and nucleus of a promising colonization was torn to pieces and scattered without any plans for the future. The great question was how to *readjust* persons and conditions to meet these new problems that had arisen so suddenly.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Swensons were traveling by the popular waterway, the Mississippi, on one of those palatial steamers—the height of luxury in those days. The October air was bracing and invigorating and Mrs. Swenson seemed to improve and gain new strength. They were sitting on the parlor deck in the beautiful moonlight with shawls and wraps around, ready for any change in the atmosphere.

“I am thinking of the Brazos tonight,” she said. “Do you know, Swenson, I have often wished of late, that we could have given the slaves their liberty. It seems to me like leaving humans in captivity, and walking away with the key to their locked chains, in your hand.”

“Yes, dear,” he admitted, “I know how you feel about it, but are we not all slaves of our destiny? The fetters of circumstances which are riveted around our lives, who can unlock them? I declare this breaking up of our conditions in life weighs more

heavily on me than the bondage does on the young, carefree negro boy or girl that learns to do a day's work and gets his food and clothes without any further worry. Besides, the free negro has a hard time of it, unless his old master lives close by and can advise him, stand up for him occasionally, and be his standby. The freedom is going to come to these people some day. It cannot be very far off. Just listen to that conversation over yonder."

"I'll tell you stranger, we ain't going to stand it much longer," said a deep voice quivering with emotion.

"What in h—ll do you propose to do about it? Come down here and take our property and rights as citizens away from us, hey?" said a gruff, uncultivated voice. "I'll tell you what, my Yankee friend, if you think one wrong is going to correct another, you are mistaken"—

"The air is full of it," observed Swenson. "You cannot help feeling it and hearing it wherever you go. If our people only had eyes and ears and could read the signs of the time, they would try to meet the issue and solve it in a peaceful way. Nothing is ever gained by violence."

"Well," she admitted, "perhaps it is best to be out of the whole business like we are."

"I know one thing," resumed Swenson, "I would not invest in a plantation and slaves again."

"What would you rather invest in?"

"Oh, I would invest all we have in restoring you to health," he exclaimed suddenly. "Otherwise, I think a good mercantile business and investment in land is a very safe course to follow."

"Oh, it is always land, land; that is your hobby, Swenson. What do you want all this worthless land for?"

"It will be worth money some day, when we get people here to till it."

"And what good will it do us when we come to die?"

"It will do us some good while we live, if we can help others get a chance to make a living. There are hundreds, nay thousands of my countrymen, just as good workmen as those that came over last fall. You see how they can work and handle an axe. Well, they will make any good, well located land, valuable where they can be induced to settle."

"I guess you are right, my dear."

"Besides," mused Swenson softly, "I have often thought of locating in Austin and starting with merchandise on a large scale. The climate is healthy, the country is growing, and the future for business is

bright. I believe it would be just as good for you up there as in Tennessee."

"Why didn't you tell me that before?"

"Because I would rather give up every prospect in the world and see you get well, my dear; but let us go down where it is warm."

The raw, chilly fall weather in central Tennessee basin with its low altitude, was anything but beneficial, and Mrs. Swenson was sinking rapidly. Bleedings and new hemorrhages of the lungs made it plain to every one around her that the end was drawing near. No one understood it better, and spoke with more resignation about the change coming than she did.

She tried to rally, and show her younger friend Cora McCready under whose hospitable roof she was sheltered, some of her former interest, but there is a limit to even a good will and a cheerful mind. The strong desire to see and be near her cousin when she passed away seemed peculiar, but the cousin was soon to learn the reason.

"Cora," she said one day when they were alone in the little, cozy sitting room where the rays of the sun filtered in through the naked limbs of the trees that grew outside, "do you remember the letter you wrote me about the husband you will eventually marry?"

Cora did not remember. "Don't you remember you

wrote me that the husband had to be 'pretty much like that young Swede,' if you were going to have one?"

"Well, what if I did?"

"My dear Cousin, listen: You know that I am going to pass away sooner or later. I have made myself familiar with that thought. It has no terror for me, and I trust my Savior to help me through when the time comes, but I am thinking of you. If I could only make you happy in some way. I tell you, Cousin, a good thoughtful and considerate husband doesn't grow on every tree, and marriage is much like a lottery. You don't know your lot in life until it is cast in with someone—for better or worse. But there is Swenson, as good a man as you will ever find. I know him. And there is the property, the most of it came from our families. There is no one I would rather see enjoy partnership in it than you. You know it has always been a peculiar trait with me that I wanted to share my good things with others, and make everybody around me satisfied. I have this desire stronger than ever. Don't you think you could love Swenson a little bit after I am gone, Cora?"

Miss Cora sat bolt upright with staring eyes. "You are not delirious, Cousin," she said and felt her pulse.

"Delirious? No, I never felt more level-headed in all my life."

But, Cousin, who ever talked like that about mar-



riage—and their own husband—at the approach of death? It is unnatural.”

She smiled. “Is it so foolish? I thought I was talking real good common sense. But then I admit I have always been a little peculiar about these things. When, for example, Swenson came to our place, I liked him right away and enjoyed to have him at the table, and carry on a conversation with him. If I could have found him a suitable wife it would have been my pleasure to see him well married. Same way with young Dyer, and Swenson’s sister. I have always been interested in love matches, and I assisted them all I could. Why should not people be happy in this world?”

“Well that terrible fellow gave me enough of Texas slavery. It made a red hot abolitionist of me.”

“But, dear, that was only on one occasion that his ambition carried him too far. He was sorry for it afterwards, and Swenson says that no man is more loyal or ambitious to please his friends than Dyer.”

But Cora was a doubting Thomas in a feminine form, and if she thought otherwise in her secret moments, she concealed it.

Mrs. Swenson did not meet the frankness and understanding she hungered for, and was willing to exchange with others. Perhaps she was a little delirious at times. Perhaps her peculiar benevolence turned

into weakness. But it was a persistent idea that possessed her. Rigorous in self-scrutiny, she came near condemning herself—under great physical debility—for thoughts and temptations that she was absolved from.

So she took it up with her husband the next time they had a private conversation together.

“Do you know, Swenson, what is going to be my last wish?” she asked. “I wish you would marry Cora when I am gone.”

“But, my dear—”

“Listen, and don’t interrupt me. I have a confession to make, and you know ‘an honest confession is good for the soul.’ That girl loved you well enough to have married you many years ago, if it had not been for this cruel, wicked woman that you married.”

“But, dear—”

“Now listen and be quiet. It was I who ridiculed the idea, that she was falling in love with a peddler. And she believed me and gave you up. Otherwise you would have married a healthy, beautiful woman and been a happy husband today, instead of being chained to a doomed life.”

“But, dear, didn’t you try to pull off a love match between Miss Cora and myself?”

“Yes, didn’t I? And was I not so selfishly glad when you wrote me that love letter. And did I not

accept your courtship so greedily, without thinking or caring what became of my dear loving, and sacrificing cousin. But it served me right. I was not going to possess my enjoyment long. And I want to pull the thorn out of my heart while I live. I wish so much to set right the wrong I have done while I can. Promise me, dear, to respect my last wish."

"But suppose she doesn't want me, what then?"

"Then you are free."

"Don't you know, Jeanette, that you are delirious?"

"Yes, that is what Cora says also, when I talk about this thing."

"Have you spoken to her, also, about it?"

"Why, yes, can't you understand I must set it right before I go?"

"But I will never believe that you were deceitful about these things," he said.

"Don't the catechism say that the heart is a deceitful thing and full of wickedness?"

"But doesn't the good book say: 'That He will give you a new heart?' Do you know, I believe your emotions, temptations and thoughts, are getting mixed up, until, in your weak condition, you accuse yourself of being guilty and accountable for every flitting thought that has crossed your mind? Can't you drop it and go to sleep?"

"Perhaps you are right. I will try and sleep now.

'An honest confession,' you know—" and she winked with her rougish eye, that used to win her so many friends during former years. Then she dropped off to sleep.

But there was no escape from her favorite thought. She referred to it time and again. Even in the presence of both her dearest friends. It was embarrassing, but there was so much love and good will manifested at the same time, that they had no remarks, to the contrary, to offer.

"It is a weakness of mind which we will have to bear with patience," observed Swenson to Miss McCready one day.

And this "weakness" increased in strength as it drew near the last struggle.

"I want to hold your hands, like Ed wanted to hold my hands," she said one day. "You, Swenson, must hold my right hand, and Cora my left hand. Then I can die peacefully."

And so she passed away peacefully and smiling one early morning, whispering to herself: "I know, I know—I—know—"

Whether her mind was enfeebled by her weakness or not, there was no chance to dodge the issue she had so persistently presented to them. They tried to look each other in the face as they spoke, they tried to appear natural, and take the inevitable as

calmly as possible. They tried to give each other to understand that it was a peculiar, unaccountable turn of mind, her wishes had taken during the last weeks. But Swenson felt it his duty, when the last care that loving hands could give the remains had been performed, to have a plain understanding with Miss McCready. So he sought an interview at the earliest moment.

“Miss McCready,” he said at the breakfast table the morning after the funeral, “we have taxed your hospitality to the utmost, and perhaps your patience also. I don’t want to risk your displeasure by offering compensation. But how can I do something, that will evidence my gratitude? If absolute silence will be the most agreeable to you, I will not say one word in addition. But, if, on the other hand, we could speak calmly without hurting each others feelings, and without disrespect to the one departed, whom we both loved so well; if we could speak frankly about what has transpired, before I depart, I would much prefer that.”

She turned pale, but bowed her head in silence.

“It seems to me,” he resumed, “that this deathbed has sobered and mellowed everything in connection with it. Everything—the grief, the eventualities, the inevitable, the forestallments of things possible—everything was arranged beforehand. And now, a



great calm is hovering over it all. If I had to go down again to that plantation on the Brazos, I would pity myself even beforehand, but now I am spared that torture. And it seems to me that grieving after her is too sacred to be indulged in. Her life has been such a perfect one, that it has been a blessing to everyone privileged to come under her influence. It has sanctified and hallowed everything, even the hallucination that her weak mind was working under, and which, otherwise, would have been intolerable to both of us. I don't ask you to forgive. I know you have done that long ago."

"But," interrupted Miss McCready, "do you think she was irresponsible—out of her mind, when she spoke of these things?"

"Yes," he replied, "when she accused herself of the wickedness of her heart, I think she was a little bit beside herself. She was a thoroughly good woman. Good through and through. But she may have been rational in her other wish, and if it is as sacred to you as it is to me, I would suggest to you, Miss McCready, that we try to respect and consider her wish, and find out the inclination of our hearts during the next twelve months. It is a peculiar situation which few, if any, people in this world are called upon to face, but do you know of any other way to meet the difficulty?"



She raised her eyes and met his for an instant.

"If that is your wish, Mr. Swenson, I will agree with you. It is not because I have lacked suitors that I am unmarried. But I have decided if I am ever going to marry, I want a husband to whom I can look up and respect. I have the highest admiration for your principles of honor, Mr. Swenson. There is only one objection: I will never settle down on a plantation and have slaves worked around me like souless animals."

Mrs. Swenson and I had decided that question already," he answered.

He arose from the table at the same time with her. "Let it be a twelve month probation then," he said. "Sometime, I will call and learn our fate. In the meantime, let me thank you," he grasped her hand and held it in his—for a minute—"let me thank you for what you have done for us," he raised her hand and kissed it reverently. It was such a knightly action, mated with gratitude, that it seemed to her perfectly natural, and in a few minutes he was gone.

She watched his form as he strode with slow, measured steps down to the horse lot to get his riding horse. "If anyone is ever going to win my heart, he will," she whispered to herself. "But, good Lord," she breathed at the same moment, "what a thought to be bartering for love and marriage before the corpse

of the first wife is cold in her coffin. Surely 'the heart is a depraved and deceitful thing, and who is able to fathom it'."

But out in the kitchen, Aunt Dinah exclaimed to the two maids: "Good Lawd a massy! I tink de world done cum ta an end. Here's Mistess jes put in de groun' yisterday, and Marse Swenson makes lub to Mis' McCready a'ready. I d'clar, I nebber seen sich lak."

"Das b'cas you's a free nigger, sis Armstrong," one of the maids observed.

"Free nigger, nuttin', Dinah sputtered. "Dis po ole 'oman gwine ter stay wid my people s'long as I lib."

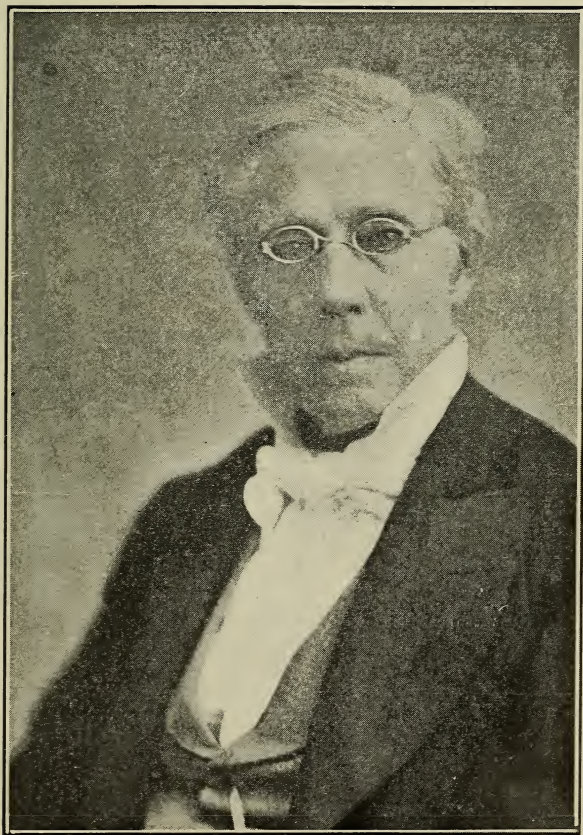
But there was no need of complaining of those two, so strangely linked together by the whim of a dying mortal. Swenson departed for New York and was soon occupied with mercantile plans and purchases. But after a week's work and mingling with the multitudes he always sat down when the Sabbath approached, and wrote a respectful, tender letter to the lone woman in central Tennessee, who kept the grave of her beloved cousin supplied with fresh flowers.

Odd, how a third person can influence the lives of two others, long after death!

## CHAPTER XI

### BEGINNING ANEW.

Sam Houston continued as the representative of the "Lone Star State" in the Senate at Washington, whittled his pine shingles, wore his blanket, defended the Indians whenever they needed the influence of a friend in the legislative gathering of lawmakers at the Capitol; opposed in his memorable speech of 1854 the "Kansas and Nebraska Bill," and voted against the Leecompton constitution of Kansas. Between times he "said nothing," save "muttering," and "whittled shingles." P. Hansbrough Bell was the efficient Governor serving two terms, or up to 1853. The Indians were finally moved out of Texas, and settled on the Indian reservation north of Red River, and what was once considered an unsafe frontier, became a safe country to colonize. Plans and contracts for railroads were considered and later realized. By 1855 thirty-two miles of track were completed from Harrisburg to the Brazos river opposite Richmond. Later it was extended to Brenham, and finally in 1871 completed to Austin.



SIR SWENTE PALM



The sectional strife over the location of the State Capitol made Swenson "make haste slowly." But when the strife of 1850 was ended, he concluded to go on with his mercantile plans for all there was in it. On his way back from New York, he paid Miss McCready a short visit (letters had paved the way for a fair understanding between the two friends), and coming down the Mississippi, and up the Brazos he sought out his old friend and reliable kinsman, Swente Palm.

Palm's term as postmaster had expired, and he was ready to fall in with Swenson in his big plans.

"We will sell out the business here in La Grange," proposed Swenson, "and then I will give you one-fifth interest in our big business in Austin, and 20% of our profits. In my absence you will be the manager, and we will both do well."

So they agreed and succeeded in disposing of the store and its contents.

"It seems to me," observed Swenson one day when they were calculating on the original investment, the progress, and final net profit, "that you are not an energetic business man, Palm. You have not made much headway with this business. If I cannot do better in Austin than this, I would quit before I started."

Palm colored slightly. "Have you noticed my library?" he asked.



“Library? What do you want a library for?”

“Because I don’t want to become a goldplated barbarian with riches, with no sense to enjoy a good thing. Which do you value most, Swenson: a refined person or his riches?”

“Oh, I guess I appreciate both,” he answered with a shrewd little smile.

“Yes, but will riches produce a refined temperament?”

“It will enable you to have a whole lot of things necessary to leading a refined life.”

“True! but if you put a ring of gold in the nose of a pig—”

“He will still be a pig.”

“Exactly! Now listen: I am not going to be a pig with a ring of gold in my nose. It is true I have invested a couple of thousand dollars in books. Come here,” he added with pride, “and I will show them to you, but it is my own money.” He opened the door to a small neat room with a writing desk and shelves full of books. Hundreds of them.

“My goodness! Palm,” Swenson exclaimed, “that is a whole wagon load, and a dead capital that will never bring any return.”

Palm straightened up, and looked hard at Swenson through his glasses. “It is books and learning that have made me an efficient man along my lines, and is

enabling me to fill a position as Secretary to General Ward, if he decides to accept the nomination to Panama as ambassador.”

“What! Old ‘Pegleg Ward’? Well, I guess he needs someone to write his Government reports.”

“He is not the only one of our prominent men deficient in learning. Have you noticed how ‘Old Jacinto’ writes his name?”

“Sam Houston, of course.”

“Yes, I know. But when old Captain Bragg received a pretty pompous letter from Houston awhile back (you knew he always held a grudge against ‘Old Sam’) and came to the signature of Houston, the old gentleman came near choking with rage.

“‘I believe ‘Sam’ is going stark crazy!’ he said. ‘He always was fond of big words and flowery oration, and all that, but now he winds up his letter and says, “I am Houston”,’ and he showed me the letter. ‘Captain,’ says I—recognizing his mistake at a glance, ‘that is the way General Houston always signs his name.’ He looked at me long and hard. ‘Do you believe that truly?’ he said at last. I had a hard time convincing him of his mistake.”

Swenson pulled a letter from his pocket. “I had a letter from him some time ago, but never paid any attention to the way he writes his name.” But looking over the latter part of the letter—“there it is all

right. 'I am Houston.' Funny, isn't it? Well, Houston is a great man nevertheless; much greater than Ward. You have not promised Ward have you?"

"If you think I am such a spendthrift and unambitious man, as you hint at, I am greatly inclined to accept his offer."

"Now, Palm, we are not going to fall out about these things. But I will not listen to your going to Panama. I want one in whom I can have absolute confidence, and you know I trust you. You see, Palm, I have not abandoned my colonization plan yet. I want to bring our people up to some higher, more healthy location. Then I intend to go, and bring over some more colonists from the Old Country. But we must help those we have already here. I intend to visit Aunt Anna and her boys up at New Ulm, on my way to Austin. If I can induce them to settle upon Brushy creek, where I have some land, I will do so. In the meantime I want you to superintend the business in Austin. It would not do to leave it in the hands of unknown or unreliable persons."

"Well, and how is the courtship proceeding, Swenson?"

"How is your own proceeding, Palm?"

"Well, Miss Alm and her sister, Laura, write me that they intend to risk the deep blue sea, pirates, Indians, and all, and come over next year or the

year after. I wish they would. I am tired of this bachelor mode of living."

"When is Miss McCready coming down?"

"I really cannot tell you anything about it, Palm. You must understand that these things are almost sacred to me. It is less than six months since my wife was laid away."

"Forgive me, Swenson, I am a thoughtless brute."

"With all your book learning? Yes, I forgive you freely."

So the two friends separated. Palm to remain in La Grange until he was needed in Austin. Swenson visited Aunt Anna, living near New Ulm with her six boys. They tried their best in the new country—in which they had so early lost the father and husband—to till the soil and raise something of a crop. They did not suffer any privation worse than other new settlers, thanks to the willing boys who, although young, worked like men to help the brave mother, but they were lonesome, separated from their kin-folks. Neighbors were kind like all new settlers generally are, one to another, but everybody had their own hands full, providing for their own needs. "I don't complain, Swenson," the brave woman said, "but sometimes I wish I could have a good cup of coffee, once more. We have not had a coffee bean in the house for six months."

Swenson was deeply moved. "You shall have all the coffee, Aunt Anna, that you want. Send August up to San Felipe for it. I will leave an order there for you. Sugar can be raised, and purchased here cheap enough. I will see that you get some good coffee." Then he unfolded his plans for the future. "And if you can spare August, I will take him in my employ in Austin, and make a good clerk, and maybe a merchant out of him. You know I wanted to bring him with me when I was home in Sweden on my visit in '47; but you could not spare him then. If you will dispose of your property here, and move up on my land on Brushy creek you can have all the land you and the boys can work up there free of charge, until we make some other arrangement. Dyer and Annie are going to move up there. It is a healthy, fertile, well watered and beautiful country and no Indians now, to bother you. By and by we will get some more of our people together there. You will be nearer to me then, and I can help you and assist you oftener."

And leaving new thoughts, hopes, and plans, he departed for Austin. August went in the little old Swedish wagon to bring home that much coveted and prized coffee. It proved to be a big sack weighing 165 pounds, the choicest coffee, and August re-

marked to his mother on coming home with his treasure: "Mother, ain't we rich now?"

Oh, the pioneer days of our early settlers! If they could be printed, painted and described in all their simplicity, with their hardships and sacrifices, borne with such patience. Their pitiful death and burial scenes, with hopes "springing eternal in the human heart," and hopes blasted, and the slow evolution, out of which present day conditions have developed, we would always keep the memory green of those faithful toilers who laid the foundation, but reaped so little reward themselves.

And right here we will leave Aunt Anna, parching her coffee, according to the old-time rules, and drinking and enjoying "once more" a good cup of coffee.

Austin had a population of 639 souls in 1850. After the "second runaway scrape" in 1842, the population increased slowly, but steadily. The old Bullock tavern, which came very near going out of business together with other famous boarding establishments and mercantile houses, during the removal of the Government in 1842 and succeeding years, was again doing business under new management. Ziller erected his stone building, the first of its kind in Austin, and Lamar Moore built his brick building. George Hancock conducted his business where the Scarbrough building now stands and one block north of the mag-



nificent Littlefield building and adjoining the Governor's "Mansion" (a small, simple house in those days), Swenson rented a store building from "Dutch John" right in front of his bakery, and at an early date he purchased the lot on which the Majestic Theatre and the Avenue Hotel now stand. The air was full of bustle and enterprise. Capital and investments were evidenced on every hand. It was a pull—"a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull all together" for a "Greater Austin," and the decade before the civil war, saw Austin develop by leaps and bounds, and the population increased to nearly four thousand souls.

Swenson and Palm were together once more. They slept, boarded, planned, and rode together. They purchased mules and wagons, harness and feedstuff. They made acquaintances and were introduced to new people and met old friends at unexpected turns. Governor Bell, coming and going from his "mansion" to or from the "capitol" (standing near where the new City Hall is erected) would occasionally stop for a friendly chat to learn a little of their intention.

"Going to buy any hands when you start up," he inquired one day. "I guess I could put you in touch with a gentleman who wants to sell plantation, slaves and all. Good money in that line, if you know how to run it."

But Swenson said: "No, we will need no slaves."

"But how are you going to get the work done? You must have men."

Then Swenson unfolded his pet scheme; how he intended to bring over colonists to help develop the country, to use free men as teamsters and tillers of the soil, to trade with them and build up business and commerce. "We are negotiating right now to bring over some Swedes from the Old Country. They ought to be as good and desirable immigrants as the Germans."

"Well, we need a good class of people to settle this old Empire. Bring them over here, Swenson, by all means. I would rather have the real colonists that want to till the soil, than these northern agitators who just stir up strife and discontent over the slavery question wherever they go."

"But we will have to face that issue some day, Governor."

The Governor looked at him sharply. "You are not an abolitionist, are you?"

Swenson looked him in the face. "I am for Texas first, last, and all the time. I believe in this State, and I am investing all I possess here."

"Which is not a very small sum either, I have heard. Well, good morning. I wish you good luck, and if

you need any assistance in your colonization work, don't hesitate to call on me, Swenson."

"Fine man," observed Swenson to Palm, "even if he believes in slavery with all his soul."

\* \* \* \* \*

These two men rode out east of town one day, to look at some property for sale. "This Fountleroy property with its 400 acres can be bought very reasonable." Swenson confided to Palm. "I need a place near town for a home where I can have room for both servants and animals, where I can raise some feedstuff and have a little elbow room. This location up here on the plateau, overlooking the bottom lands, is one of the finest views, and the coziest place, at the same time, that I have seen around here. Hamilton intends to buy the estate across the creek. He will make a good neighbor, which is very important."

So the transaction was concluded, and the property became the Swenson homestead for many a year to come. A lot was bought near the Avenue and the store, and later, a house was built that for almost half a century, was the home of the late Consul and Knight, Sir Swente Palm.

By the end of the year, the preliminary preparations were perfected, by the help of some of the immigrants from the party which arrived in 1848, some making good foremen, others teamsters. The ex-

pected immigrants from the Old Country arrived. The goods for the store arrived and were hauled first from Houston, and later from Richmond and Brenham. Swente Palm was the agent in Swenson's absence. Daniel Heard was foreman. Aunt Anna's second son, August, was employed as one of the clerks. Bergstrom, Berryman, the Munsons, Holmstrom, and others arrived from time to time and were employed. Some farmed and raised crops. The two hub centers of this busy life were the store in town and the home place on Go Valle. The watchmaker and jeweler, Gustav Palm, a third uncle, moved up from La Grange, and opened up a shop in Austin. The trade prospered in the new store, and the saying went around in later years—but what is the use of telling the income in dollars of a day's sale. Suffice it to say, that it often went into sums of four numbers—a great sum of money in those days.

Meanwhile William Dyer moved up and settled on Brushy creek, and the year after, they were followed by Aunt Anna and her five sons, who lived in a camp on the creek until they could get a log house. Today the prosperous settlement is known as Palm Valley.

The Nelsons, Hurds, Palms, Munsons, and others joined the nucleus of that prosperous colony, which gave promise and indication of a healthy normal

growth. The outlook was bright, the progress along all lines was encouraging, and Swenson laid bigger plans than ever. Surely the "*beginning anew*" this time, was along safe and sure lines.

The only shadow threatening was the sectional strifes, brewing between North and South.

## CHAPTER XII

### A DREAM WHICH CAME TRUE.

During 1851, Swenson made a trip North. There was an eventual understanding with Palm that the trip might be extended to Sweden with the object in view of securing more colonists. There were also certain allusions, that he might come back a married man, bringing his wife with him. And there were instructions as to what should be done if that were the case.

“If I am going to bring a wife home, there will have to be certain improvements, overhauling, house-painting, and tidying up on the place,” he said, “but I will let you know in time. If anything happens to me, if I should die and not show up, there are certain letters and documents deposited with Shepherd in Houston, that will give directions about everything.

“When I come back, and have everything in shape, Palm, we will build a three-story building on the



corner, that will be occupied as a first-class hotel, and then we will build a big store and warehouse. Then we will be ready to do business on a bigger scale than ever. Goodbye!"

And with these instructions he departed.

He visited B. A. Shepherd as usual, and then went on his way to Tennessee. The letters between him and Miss McCready during the more than twelve months that had passed, convinced him, more than ever, that he had a woman of character, and capability to deal with. She was not going to fall in his arms like a ripe peach, that was one thing certain. And, like most determined men, that trait of character only made him more eager to capture the prize. Surely it must be a prize for a man in his circumstances, so often away on business as he was, to have a wife with a firm hand who could rule and direct the home affairs in his absence; what a comfort that must be. And besides, wasn't she a refined woman, beautiful and respected? It was a wonder no one else had carried that treasure away long before. What if her love for him had been a steady but well concealed affection all these years. He felt his heart beat harder at this thought. Some women leave all that for a man to find out. Like the closed oyster with the pearl, they leave it to the man who is to be the husband to find out. If he makes the mistake of passing the one with

the pearl of the hidden love, the proud woman will let him go, and be more reserved than ever. He had seen such women, too, in his day. What if Miss McCready was such a woman? But that was character, after all. He, the level-headed business man, who could with a calm smile on his face drive a bargain that involved thousands of dollars, felt strangely nervous when the Elmville farmstead came in sight, imbedded in the fresh, deep green color of the elms growing around the house. He had prepared a little speech, but he could not remember it. Miss McCready was on the porch, the picture of all that was fresh, healthy and lovely. She was dressed like she was going out, or maybe she had company? What an awkward situation for a man on a love errand! For a moment he forgot his business plans and cold calculation, and the thought flitted across his mind as he came up the walk: "Oh, if I could only have a home with her at my side."

How they talked over the past and builded for the future is the same old story of love and hope and realization. Cora McCready, with independent ideas far ahead of the times, acknowledged she was glad to shift her burden on his strong and capable shoulders.

"I have tried to hold out till you would come. I was too proud to let my kinspeople know what it

cost me to keep a stiff upper lip; now I understand how much I have been longing for you—needing you.”

“Yes,” he acquiesced, “I think it is a dangerous game to play, when a man and a woman needing the company and counsel of one another, try to keep away from each other. I get so heart weary and soul-sick of all the bustle, sharp trades and dickerings in this world, that I don’t know what will become of me, if I cannot have a home and be surrounded by homelike comforts now and then.

“I tell you, Sue, the redemption of the South will have to be made by good women. Otherwise we will develop into brutes down there.”

She colored slightly. “How did you find out my middle name?” she wondered.

“Oh, even a stupid man, can find out something about the woman he worships. I like Sue better than Cora.”

“And I never could stand Sue,” she laughed, “just because we had a big, scrawny, lazy, longeared mule on father’s place, and the boys were always teasing me about old lazy Sue. But it sounds very different from your lips.”

“Were you expecting company, Sue?”

“Yes, I was waiting for you.”

“And how did you know at what time I was coming?”

"I knew when the packet steamer was arriving at Memphis. Also when the stage arrives at Lexington."

"And so you have been expecting me ever since last week? "Let us take a ride in the buggy I took at Lexington. The horses are fresh yet. I want to take you out behind two of the best horses I have ever traveled behind in all my life."

"But you must have a bite to eat and a cup of coffee after the long ride. No one shall go out of my house fasting."

"I have had a feast already, Sue."

"Then we will make it a double one."

She led him to the table—already set—she poured the coffee, she proffered him the dainty dishes her own hands had prepared. And he relished it to her evident satisfaction. What woman does not like to see her cooking appreciated?

"This tastes better than hotel life or boarding house fare." he observed, drinking his third cup of coffee. "Oh, Sue! if you only knew how I long for a home with you presiding at the table. But let us take our ride."

After a long ride through the green shaded roads, they passed the well kept cemetery, where his first wife was buried, and he knew Sue McCready had made many pilgrimages to that spot.

"This has been your shrine, Sue, where you have

been worshipping," he managed to say, as he bared his head in mute reverence. "She was our good star after all, and has sanctioned this tie by her desire. I could not see then how wise and loving she was, or what a clear vision she had. But we cannot live in the past. The present forces us along, whether we want to or not."

"If I thought I was robbing her of the rightful place in your life," she said, "I would not sit here by your side, even now."

"You would be robbing her of the satisfaction she had set her heart on attaining, if you withdrew from my side now."

He stopped suddenly:

"Say, my dear, why could we not step over to Parson Whipple, and have the marriage ceremony tonight. Then we will drive over to old man McCready and ask his blessing and a wedding supper. Then all remonstrance from the old man is forestalled."

"But I am not dressed in a bridal gown."

"Do you care so much for that, dear?"

So they caught the good old parson in the cowpen pulling, and directing some uncomplimentary remarks, at a strong suckling calf, who evidently tried to reduce the milk available to the minimum for the



parson and his pail. "Always tryin' to get more than your share," he grumbled.

There was no help for it. They had to wait until the parson and the calf had divided their spoils, then he came in, flustered and perspiring, changed his clothing, got his book and was ready just as the sun went behind the hills.

"A little bit unusual and unlooked for, but I guess we can tie the knot so it won't slip. You are doing the right thing, my children. Nothing like considering what is appropriate and right before all men, as the good book says."

So they were married in the summer twilight, with the sexton and Mrs. Whipple as witnesses.

"There is only one thing I disapprove of, Mr. Swenson," he said when the newly made husband and wife were ready to depart. "I don't like to lose my best parishoner. But I hope you have an Episcopal church down there and I will send Mrs. Swenson her credentials whenever she is ready to be transferred."

"Do you know, dear," the newly wedded wife confided to her husband as they sped toward her father's estate, "that I dreamed of just such a ride as this, that night when you stopped at Lipton's down on the Brazos and I met you there. Do you know I dreamed that we were riding in a buggy together—"



"Then your *"Dream is Coming True,"* interrupted Swenson, and squeezed her hand.

"—And we were driving up towards some hills studded with shaggy liveoaks and other trees, and you pointed with the whip and said: 'There is our home up on those hills'."

He gave her another tender look and said: "Your dream is coming true."

She looked up in glad surprise. "Is the house really on a hill?" she asked.

He nodded. "On a hill, yes, and liveoaks all around it."

"Then, I know I'll feel at home," she said.

Old McCready, who went to bed with the chickens, had already undressed himself when the dogs started their racket. The servants wondered, "Who is coming;" and his wife, putting on her spectacles for the third time, wondered, "Who in the world it could be," when the new couple informally made their entrance and were at last ushered into the parlor.

"Well, I'll be goldarned," the old man spluttered, when informed about what was up. "Let me get hold of that fellow and give him a good shake."

"But father, pull on your pants first," said Mrs. McCready.

"Gimme my Sunday pants then."

So with Sunday shirt unbuttoned, and one suspender trailing behind, he made haste to get in and have a "shake." It proved a very friendly "shake."

"But children, you cannot run to the parson to-night and be married. It is too late."

"Father, I told you they have already been there," said his patient wife.

"You done been there, hey? Why don't you go home like good children then, and behave?"

"We wanted your blessing, father," Swenson said, as they both stood up.

"Well now, if I had a prayer book, I might read a prayer fer yous, but ef yous be good and love your Creator and do to others what yous want them to do to yous, I reckon yous'll get along purty well. That's all I got to say. Good-night children," and the old "fire-eater" stalked off to bed again, without risking contaminating himself by conversing with a "Union man."

Old Mrs. McCready had lighted the chandelier and was offering refreshments and excuses for the old man, alternately. "Have some marmelade, Swenson, you know it just riles 'father' more than anything when he reads abolition literature, and there is no help for it. Now here is some good home-made wine. 'Father!' " she called, "Won't you come in and join us?"

"Gol darn it, you fooled me out of bed oncet, that's nuff."

"Oh come on, Grandpa," said Swenson, greatly amused, "and drink a toast for our welfare."

"Drink yourself," said the old man, "and lemme alone, I want to go to sleep."

So the wedding supper was cut short, and the guests departed after listening to many apologies for the self-willed old man who would not even respond to the cheerful "good-bye" which the newly weds called to him as they departed. Instead, he turned his deaf ear towards the door and muttered, when they were out of the house, "Gol darn it," to go and marry a Union man, gol darn it."

\* \* \* \* \*

Swenson wanted his wife to go with him to New York and later to Sweden, but she declined. She could barely stand travel on a river steamboat, and the open sea between New Orleans and Galveston would nearly kill her. She needed some time to get ready for the journey and to make arrangements about her property. She would rather not have him go either. He might get drowned, but if it was absolutely necessary, she would not dictate to him. Why couldn't he send somebody else to Sweden? And, Swenson admitted that she might be right about it.

So he went alone to New York, purchased goods,

met his old friend General Pearson, was introduced to other men of affairs, and got to be rated as a successful Southern business man with ample capital behind him.

It was a beautiful day in the autumn when Swenson returned to Texas with his wife. The promised notification pertaining to the renovation of the home place had been received in due time, and put in execution. Order and neatness were in evidence everywhere, the store was nearly depleted of goods, and the big iron safe nearly full of money, but the thing that pleased him most was when his wife, after getting home on the hills among the live oaks, exclaimed: "It is just like the place I imagined it would be."

"Well I am glad to hear it," he replied. "But to tell the truth, I have dreamed also. I have seen a vision of a two-story stone mansion, built of cut white limestone, that will be an ornament to the location, comfortable to live in, and beautiful to look at. That will be our future home here near Austin. But first I will have to build a store and warehouse, and the hotel building. Then we will see if my dream comes as true as yours did."

So Swenson went to his business, leaving his wife with ample help, to improve conditions inside and outside his house.

He looked and inquired for Palm.

"Palm?" said one of the clerks. "He never comes down to business before noon, and then he reads all day."

"Why, Swenson," said a prominent man and citizen, overhearing the conversation, "You ought to know that Palm was never cut out for a business man. He reads all day long, and way into the night. He will never amount to anything in the store. And I suppose he spends all his income on books. He is sending for books continually."

That did not sound very promising to Swenson.

About eleven o'clock in the morning Palm could be seen coming across the Avenue, with red eyelids, pale and listless. The two men were going to talk matters over a little.

"You don't look well, Palm, are you sick?"

"No, just a little bit sleepy," (stretching and yawning). "I have been interested in the ancient 'runes' and the translation of them lately. I tell you, Swenson, it is mighty interesting literature. Did you get the book of the 'Icelanders' Legends' that I asked you to buy?"

"No, Palm, I did not go to Sweden this time."

"I see. Well it would be rather hard to ask you to go there and trouble yourself with colonists instead of honeymooning."

Swenson colored a little. "I would not take a jab from anyone else like that, Palm."

"As I was saying," Palm resumed, "these 'runes,' consisting of sixteen characters, were used by the Scandinavians and Icelanders in Christ's time—and perhaps before that"—and he unfolded his favorite theme along the line of his research.

Swenson frowned a little. "What do I care for 'runes' now. I want to talk business. There is nothing but empty shelves in the store. Have you noticed that?"

"Haven't you noticed the money in the safe, Swenson?"

"Of course, but couldn't you have replenished the stock from Houston, or from San Felipe where they have some provisions in stock? Letting the stock run out like this is not a good business policy. I think you are reading too much, Palm, and giving too little attention to business. We will have to put in our best strokes of work in the future, if we are going to realize our plans. We will have to throw the books aside and work—work hard."

Now it was Palm's turn to color. He rose up. "I won't stand in the way of your plans," he said, with indignation. "I have not been out of this dusty rough little town during the whole summer. You expect me to stay here like a chained dog, while you



travel and have a good time, and then you blame me for reading. Perhaps it would have been better to hang around the saloons and gambling houses, hey? Let us quit this fool partnership. I have about made up my mind to go with Thomas Ward to Panama."

"Well all that may be true, Palm, but you will hardly find Panama a more agreeable place than Texas; neither will you find Ward an easier man to get along with than I am. But you need a vacation, Palm, and perhaps a trip to Panama will be all right. My advice is, let your partnership stay like it is, and when you are tired of Panama come back to your old place. I need some one that I can trust and no matter if you are a bookworm, you are as good as gold when it comes to honesty and character. Let us shake hands on that, Palm. There is no need of separating like enemies. By the way, when are the Misses Alms coming over?"

"Well I have sent money for their passage if they can muster up courage to come. If not, it is all right. But they will go to Gustav in La Grange when they arrive. It is arranged that way." And the conference ended.

\* \* \* \* \*

By the early summer time, 1852, Palm was ready to start for Panama.

Swenson called him in one day. "Let me show

you something, Palm. We just got these in last night with the other goods. I purchased quite a lot of them up North, but they did not arrive till yesterday. They are the new government pistols, made better than any pistols you have ever seen down here. I would advise you to take a couple of these six-shooters, you could defend yourself a good while with them." So they were added to Palm's equipment, and long after Palm's home-coming from Panama, were looked on as relics. They were made of the bluest steel that no rust will ever attack—six-chamber cylinder, with cap equipment.

"And remember, Palm, that the position is open to you any time that you wish to return," said Swenson when taking leave of him.

Palm's trouble started when he wanted to take his books with him on the journey. A whole wagon load!

"What in———do you want to do with all those books," Ward wanted to know. "Suppose we get wrecked? I thought you had read that darned stuff through once. Cut it out, I tell you, if you put any value on them. They will never come home again in good shape, and deliver me from a book with half of the pages gone."

So Palm had to store his books in Austin, and after many vexations caused by Ward's irritable temper,

when the old revolutionary spirit was rampant, they departed for Panama.

“He will come back again a wiser man,” Swenson confided to his cousin, the young August, as they watched the stage coach “Sam Houston” carry the party off.

During 1853 several letters came from Palm telling of his experience in the Isthmus Republic. The living expenses were high, the drouths (when drinking water had to be hauled for several miles) were terrible; the rainy seasons (when rain fell in torrents) were dismal; the cathedral with its towers as well as other old buildings in the capital, dating from the 17th century, were extremely interesting, and the literature on their creation and their purpose something of superb interest. The earthquakes would dry up the wells, and shake up the inhabitants occasionally, and last but not least, the construction of the railroad by Totten and Trautwine across the Isthmus was calculated to be completed by 1855. Surely this old (or new) world was moving some.

But what effected Palm’s mind most of all and upset all his plans of diplomatic advancement—in Panama at least—was the advent of the “ladies” from Sweden, scheduled to take place during the summer. Ward was not exactly a pleasant man in trying cir-

cumstances, and Palm wanted a place and steady work when he got married.

Of course, Swenson wrote and played the father of the prodigal son for all there was in it. He would not kill the fatted calf exactly, but he would build a house on West Ninth—the lot already bought so that Palm could move in right away. Yes, the place was open for him and he would try to remember his own limitations when it came to literature and all that, and try to respect Palm's inclination for studies and books even if he could not understand. It was a compromise and a truce all around.

In the fall of 1853 the two ladies arrived from the old country. The pluck and nerve they had exhibited in coming the long journey alone and unattended had almost exhausted them. Erect, reserved, pale, and exclusive in manner, distrustful in the extreme and dignified with all, what was their consternation, on arriving in La Grange to learn that Palm was not there. The mail went slowly, and a letter or two had evidently been lost. But everything turned out satisfactorily when Palm appeared a few days later, and a wedding was inaugurated that concluded the long tedious courtship which had lasted since 1841, or nearly twelve years.

It was whispered around that the young wife (she was then 38 years of age) and her sister, were of Fin-

nish birth and belonged to the nobility. One thing is certain, old Captain Alm and his family in Calmar, Sweden, were very exclusive and isolated from other people, and it was further said that literary talents of no small merit ran in the family veins. One aunt (Agnes Enstrom) published a book of poems, and the nieces—Agnes and Laura Alm—wrote a small “poem” for their mother’s birthday as early as 1824, or when they were, respectively, eight and ten years old, back in Sweden. (This poem, and many other attempts, gayly colored, from that early period, are fondly treasured by relatives in Austin.)

Among the members of this family Palm had found congenial spirits, and later, an esteemed wife. She proved to be a valuable help, and a wise counselor, and exercised, by her calm and serene temperament, a powerful and healthy influence over Palm.

The home-coming and great dinner at the Swenson homestead in Govalle had nothing smacking of the “prodigal” returning, save the excellent meat and merriment. The newly-wedded couple were certainly refined people and entitled to entrance in the best families. It showed their good sense that they began life in the simplest manner befitting their financial standing, and the pioneer community. At the nuptial feast toasts were proposed and drunk. After-dinner speeches were made. Governor Pease had ac-

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cepted the invitation for the occasion. The Duvals, Hamiltons, Paschals, Hancocks, and others of kindred spirit were present, and the dinner was a pronounced success.

"Is not this the way of new republics and governments; today up in the air with 'vivas' a la so and so, tomorrow you are thrown in a dungeon and beheaded?" Mrs. Palm managed to say to her husband, as they rode home in Swenson's new carriage.

Palm smiled a rare smile. "If that was the case, I would not be living as a married man today. No wife, you don't need to worry along those lines."

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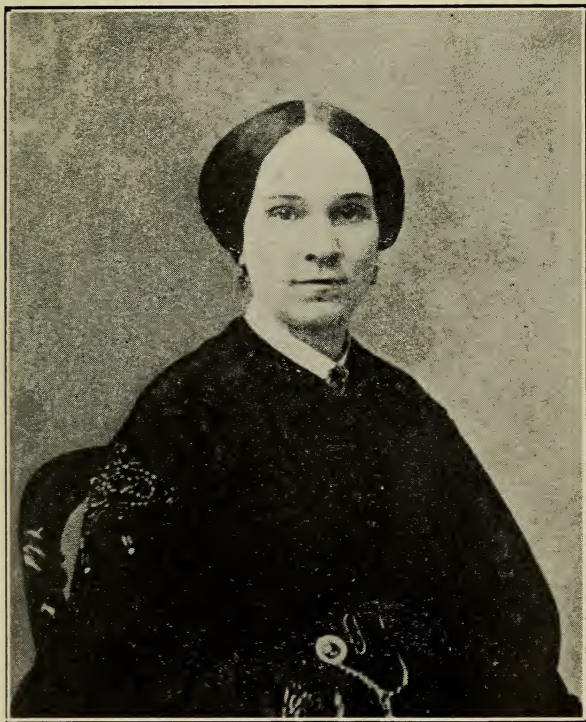
The two men were out together inspecting the buildings that were under construction. "This hotel building must be completed before fall," Swenson explained. "I have a contract with a hotel concern to have it ready at a certain date. A printing establishment will be put in on the second floor for the 'Austin Intelligencer.' A marvelous cylinder press has been ordered and will be the first of its kind in Austin. This corner is going to hum with business soon."

"But it is going to be a hard task to finish it to the promised time."

"It has to be done," answered Swenson. "If I have to hire torch-holders and night masons, I'll have it done."



And subsequent events proved that what he said was no idle vision. The torch-holders were employed, the masons worked their night shifts, the hotel was inaugurated in due time; the cylinder press revolved, and the corner hummed with the industry of the new State.



MRS. S. M. SWENSON



## CHAPTER XIII

### SHADOWS—EVENTS

Who can do justice to the peculiar conditions, sentiments and personalities before and during the period of the Civil War? Who can picture it, without risking displeasure and disapproval from one faction or the other? Never before, had one race of people stood so divided, with such firm convictions on both sides, and willing to sacrifice all they had for their convictions. The North seemed to take for granted that they could dictate to the South what was going to be or not to be.

The South understood it, that their State rights were threatened, and that they had a right to secede. There were hotheads on both sides, and sane level-headed men on both sides. After all has been said, pro and con, we are all glad that the Union was preserved. What this grand country would have become, if secession had carried the day during the Civil War, let the small, weak, South American Republics, with their continual strife testify.

That we are spared this humiliating spectacle is a cause of eternal gratitude to the true patriot, but who can not, at the same time, help but honor and respect those convictions for which the South fought and sacrificed, with such heroic mind. To be sure, if there were hot-heads, they did not sneak away from their responsibilities in the hour of danger. They took their medicine like men. And they were worthy of a better treatment than the military regime, which the reconstruction period forced upon them.

Let these explanations illustrate the writer's position when trying to sketch this period.

Governor Pease, going by the store, would occasionally step in for a chat with Swenson and Palm.

"Do you know what Houston said in his letter to me the other day, Swenson?" the Governor said one day.

"He said, 'I am Houston,' didn't he," and both smiled.

"No, he is quite serious. He says that all circumstances point to a coming conflict between the North and the South. The northern elements in Congress and the Senate, are making new demands on the South continually. It looks like a new state cannot be admitted into the Union without a wrangle as to whether they come in as a free state or as a slave state. Fugitive slaves are not returned when they run away; even

criminals are not run down and punished if they only are black, and when the Southern Representatives claim State rights, and even the right to withdraw from the Union, they are told that they can't do it. And they tell them they will use force to keep the Union together. The Dred Scott Case is dragged from court to court, and the abolitionists declare they will carry it to the Supreme Court, and the Southern element are just as determined to have it decided according to the Constitution: that slaves are property, over which Congress can no more exercise control than over any other property. Excitement is running high on both sides, and seems to get worse instead of subsiding."

"Yes, I know what that means," Swenson replied. "I remember when on my journey North, 1851, they had a regular mob riot in Boston, and took a fugitive slave from the marshal, who had captured him, and sent the slave on to Canada. It is not long ago, since another mob in the same town attacked the jail to free a runaway negro and killed the marshal, while another bunch were holding a protest meeting in Fanuel Hall, against the fugitive slave law, and its application in this particular case."

"It is not easy to say when this smouldering fire will break out in a disastrous conflagration," the



governor said. "What is your opinion of the situation, Swenson?"

"Well, I have seen enough to warrant the belief that some States will try to secede. Is there any clause in the Constitution to prevent them from doing so?"

"Not that I know of, Swenson. But the point is: Will the North prevent it?"

"Well, Governor, to me it seems that with the North it is a moral question. There is no financial gain in it to them. And a man is generally less willing to fight for a sentiment, as long as it doesn't touch his pocketbook. With the South it includes everything connected with their social and economical welfare, and they will fight to the last ditch. If the North realized it they would hesitate more than once, but if they go in for it they will whip us I am afraid. They have the men, the wealth, and the moral backing of the whole civilized world."

"It would be a hardship on this State to have a change of government form every ten years or so. And if one State can withdraw, then every State has a right to withdraw, one from another, at any period they choose."

"What will become of us then, Governor?"

"Really, Swenson, I guess we will crawfish back to the old tribal state of the red man. We will split up in factions."

"I hope something may turn up yet to prevent it, but that new book, 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' is not going to help matters any."

"They say it spread like wildfire up North, Governor."

"Yes, I hear so, but that book is radically wrong on some subjects."

"One thing is certain, Governor, it represents a deep strong sentiment of the North."

"What does Palm say about the book?"

"Oh he thinks it an expression of fanatical enthusiasm, when it comes to set the negro over the white race, and make 'the last to be first,' in its desire to make unusual geniuses, such as sculptors, painters or artists of this race. There may be some oratorical and singing talent among them, but I doubt if it amounts to more than imitations of what they see or hear from the white people."

So the two men talked and discussed conditions without knowing what was in store for either of them, and without any clear idea what would be the proper attitude on the momentous question that was looming up on the political horizon.

Rumors circulated from time to time that Toombs of Georgia had boasted that he would call the roll of his slaves from the foot of Bunker Hill monument; that the North threatened to "send one of her regi-

ments from Mason and Dixon's line to the Gulf of Mexico and whip the rebels into submission."

And the "rebels" said they would like to see that regiment.

Rumor had it that Sumner had been "caned" by Brooks in the Senate until he could not stand on his feet, and it was asserted, a white man could not take his servant with him into a free State and bring him back again a slave. A regular war by ballot and rifle was waged in Kansas, and new territories were coming in as free States continually, thereby increasing the number of free States and the representation in Congress, both in the House and Senate.

Sam Houston was opposed to secession as well as Douglass, the opponent of Lincoln. Surely it was a performance of many colored parties. Had not the hard times of 1857, and the establishing of the Atlantic cable (completed in 1858) diverted the attention somewhat from the burning issue, the war might have come several years earlier. It came early enough, however. But many a Union-loving Southerner hoped that Texas, lying on the outskirts of the disturbed territory, would be comparatively unaffected by the conflict. Still the feeling ran as high in Texas as elsewhere.

Palm and a red-hot secessionist were engaged in a lively dispute one day.

"You see," Palm said, "it is a moral issue as well as a political and economical one. The whole civilized world is behind the anti-slavery movement with its moral support and sympathy. The same holds true in regard to secession. Who ever could sympathize with a revolutionary movement calculated to tear a country asunder."

"Yes, and who can sympathize with a man that wants to take away your property and reduce you to an underling, who undertakes to be your self-appointed guardian and administrator? Do you want me to sympathize with that kind of management? I tell you I won't do it, even if the world has no sense to understand what is going on."

"Yes, but you understand the issue has to be settled, and if it is going to be settled by force, the North will win."

"I'll be d—d if they win. You let them send that regiment south of Mason and Dixon's to the Gulf, that they brag about and we will fix them."

"Yes, but they will send a hundred more, and maybe a thousand. You have no idea of the resources of the North."

"I don't care if a man is two or three times bigger than I am. If he tries to take something away from me that don't belong to him, I'll fight him."

"I would be careful to see that I was in lawful

possession of the property before I started a fight," Palm said.

"Well, ain't possession nine points out of ten in a dispute?"

"Men might be in possession of certain things when the Divine Judgment overtakes them and metes out the just punishment, just because they are found in possession of them, and I am very much inclined to believe that the Divine Judgment is at the door."

"Oh, come Palm, don't you think nobody reads the Bible and understands it but you? I admit that the prophet Daniel speaks about the last days and the end, when the knowledge shall be great, but don't you know that when the king of the North and the king of the South have had their campaign and fortunes and misfortunes of war, he says, 'The king of the north shall come to his end, and none shall help him.'"

"Yes, and 'the land of Egypt shall not escape.' I suppose you have a place for that country also?" Palm's disputant was not going to listen, but quoted triumphantly: "The Ethiopian shall be at his steps."

—"and the Libyians?"

"Well, I guess they are black like the Ethiopians."

"Oh you cannot pin me down, Palm."

So the bickering went between men and men. Oc-

casionaly, there was some allusion to hemp neckties for obstinate fellows as an appropriate adornment.

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Meanwhile the entire store and general merchandise business prospered, and almost anything that Swenson touched turned into profit. There was an abundance of corn raised on the farm one year with no sale for it.

"It is more than can be stored in any of the buildings on my place," Swenson confided to Palm.

"Well, you will have to sell it at a sacrifice," Palm suggested.

"No, I think not," Swenson replied. "If I understand the economic laws of abundance and shortage rightly, it is for us to treasure up in the good years the surplus, so that there will be something to draw on when the lean years come around."

So a great circular cellar was dug in the slope of the hill where the drainage was good and hundreds of bushels of corn were carefully packed away for future use.

The next year, which had an unusually dry season, saw corn advance to a dollar per bushel again.

Swenson's family increased likewise. Eric, the oldest son, was named for his old friend, General Pearson, who, with his wife, later visited them and saw his namesake. The second boy was S. Albin, and the



daughters were Greta, named after Margret on Lattarp, and Nora. (When Greta was two years old Swenson had young Holmstrom, who was handy with tools, build a playhouse for the little girl. From the little house she served tea to such dignitaries as ex-Governor Pease, Morgan Hamilton, Judge Morrill and other great men. This little house—10x10—is well preserved yet, and is in possession of a loving relative, Mrs. Susanna Palm of Austin. It is related that Holmstrom was considered so handy to fix things that when Eric stumped his toe he exclaimed, "Never mind, Holmstrom can fix that all right.") When the children were large enough to go to school Miss Augusta Palm was governess for the children. Edla Larson was a housemaid. A Scotchman by the name of Jackson cared for the garden, and Aleck, a negro servant, was the "Handy Andy" on the place.

The immigration from Sweden was slow, and Swenson did not find time to go home on a second visit to induce more colonists to move over, but by 1860 one hundred and fifty-three persons of Swedish descent were living in Texas. (Today they number 11,601 persons.)

Swenson often spoke to his foreman, Dan Heard, about going home to the Old Country, and in 1857 Heard departed with his family.

"I may be able to go over and bring some immi-

grants back with me," he said to Palm, as he departed, "but to me it looks like a good time to get away from the trouble that is sure to come. I wish you could move out, also, that would be much better."

"Yes, Heard, but this is not the proper time to sell out when everybody is afraid to invest. Give my love to our home folks." With that Heard went away to return after ten years of absence, in 1867.

In 1859 Houston made his vigorous campaign for Governor. It was strenuous work and perhaps the only reason the Union principles carried the day was the magnetic personality and the convincing speeches of the favorite son of Texas. He would often drop in on Swenson for a little talk.

"No thank you," he would say, when offered a glass of liquor or a toddy. "I have done away with that kind of stuff. I tell you I had a tremendous fight to get away from the habit and I thought for a while I was a 'goner.' But I have been through what you would call a regular conversion, and I declare no one needed it more than I did. But that is where a real good God-fearing woman can work a miracle when she is in league with the Almighty. I will be proud and glad to introduce you to my wife when we move to Austin."

"How do you like the new mansion and capitol, General?" (Swenson was commissioned by Governor

Pease to buy furniture, draperies, rugs, matting, etc., for the new Governor's Mansion, when he went on a journey to New York in 1854.)

"Fine, fine. Of course they look a little bit small compared to Washington and the State House there, but compared to our early administration buildings they look fine now."

"And what is the outlook politically, General?"

"Well, Swenson, ever since Lincoln forced Douglas to declare for the 'squatters' sovereignty' it has been clear to me that Douglas will lose out in the Presidential race two years hence. The South will never stand for him. That will give us Lincoln for President two years from now. He is for the Union first, last, and all the time, and considers that the issue. If we can preserve the Union we may solve the slavery question peacefully. Lincoln is a conservative but broad-minded man, and my great object in running for Governor is just to keep Texas in the Union. As long as we stay in there is hope. And I have seen worse conditions cured in my days."

Then lowering his voice he said, "There might be a possibility that the nomination for presidency may be tendered me. If that is the case, my great, best and only card will be 'the preservation of the Union.' But this is a secret between you and me, Swenson."

"Those are my views exactly, Governor, and if I can assist you in any way I will be glad to do so."

By 1859 a fourth uncle of Swenson, Johannes Palm, with several other immigrants arrived, but the election of Lincoln, which the South construed to mean that their secession plans would be frustrated, and the excitement it created, caused immigration from Sweden to practically cease.

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Swenson and his wife were discussing building plans, and the outlook.

"With everything ready, plans, material, and workmen, there seems to be nothing else to do than go ahead and start the building," Swenson said.

"But suppose we have a war, what then? Would it not be better for us to leave everything and go back to Tennessee?"

"That would be about the worst thing we could do. If there is going to be a war, it will be fought out in the Middle States."

"Do you think Houston and his administration can keep Texas in the Union?"

"They will do their very best, and I will help directly or indirectly all I can. If I could only get well of my rheumatism everything else would be easier."

"Is there no remedy for it?"

"Nothing I know of except the Hot Springs up in Arkansas."

"Do you think there is any danger for us, staying here."

"No, dear, we have not done anything wrong, and things might turn out all right yet."

So the foundation was laid, and the new residence rose steadily, promising and imposing on the hill.

Houston was duly inaugurated; Mrs. Houston came to Austin, and Swenson and Houston had a private conference one day.

"I hate to have any secrets about my administration," he said to Swenson, "but the fact is this: Lincoln and I are of one mind in regard to the preservation of the Union. He has proposed to assist us with troops if need be, and it proves practicable. But the question is, how to provision them after they get down South? There are so many conflicting minds and influences at work it would never do to have an open bid for contract. Do you think we could handle it on the quiet, without any ado about it?"

"How much would be needed, General?"

Houston enumerated the quantities needed for a regiment during twelve months.

Swenson stroked his chin and calculated. "I will have to take stock and see what can be secured in

the open market before I can give a definite answer," he said at length.

"Very well; when can I get a definite answer?"

"About this time next week."

"All right. But say, Swenson, I want to meet Palm, Morgan Hamilton, Pease, Sam Harris, Judge Duval, the Hancocks, and a few others, at the same time—you included—for a little confidential talk. Can we meet upstairs over your store then? And you will be sure to have no undependable person around there."

"I'll see to it, General."

"One thing more, Swenson, if I procure for you a colonelship, will you accept it and use it when needed?"

"If it will help to preserve the Union, I will."

\* \* \* \* \*

The clerks were dismissed earlier than usual the appointed night a week after. The back doors to the warehouse and between the hotel and the store were closed. A couple of trusty servants were summoned from home to do duty under instructions; the shades were pulled, and only a dim candle burned in the little room upstairs where Swenson had his private office. One by one they came with ten or fifteen minutes between each. Some dressed as Mexicans, others wrapped in a blanket, Swente Palm acting as door-



keeper and August, the nephew, bustling about with some unfinished work.

"Where is Houston," was whispered time and again? "Is he backing out? Why don't he come?"

August came in with a note. It proved to be from Houston. He was detained from attending. The colonelship for Swenson was enclosed: "Judge Morrill will preside, and a note safely dispatched tomorrow with estimate, and cost of eventual provision and equipment will be all that is needed. Other plans and agreements will be communicated to me by special arrangement. Utmost secrecy necessary. We are watched. Preliminary steps are taken already to call a convention for deciding to join the Confederacy. Let's stick together—else we will hang separately," etc.

The full report of that night's meeting will never be known, but it was patriotic, honest men who wanted to do their level best to preserve the Union, in the hope that the slavery question could be solved in a peaceable way.

Let those who condemn Houston and his associates for this secret conference, remember that President Buchanan submitted his public admission "that the Constitution was silent on the secession question," after his message had been *read* and *approved* by Jefferson Davis and other leading secessionists.

Surely one faction had very small right to condemn the other for using questionable measures.

Memorable is the speech that Houston delivered before he was deposed: "You may, after the sacrifice of countless millions of treasure and hundreds of thousands of precious lives, as a bare possibility, win Southern independence, if God be not against you; but I doubt it. I tell you that while I believe, with you, in the doctrine of State rights, the North is determined to preserve the Union." And again: "I love Texas too well to bring civil strife and bloodshed upon her. To avert this calamity I shall make no endeavor to maintain my authority as chief executive of the State, except by peaceful exercise of my functions. I protest in the name of the people of Texas against all acts and doings of this convention, and declare them null and void."

"They say Governor Houston is going to his office just the same after he is deposed as before," Palm observed to Swenson one day.

"Yes, but yesterday Clark was there earlier than usual and took the old man's chair."

"He did. Well didn't 'Old Sam' make a row about it."

"No. He will go down in history, dignified, a pathetic figure, and be worshipped some day. He just said, 'You are out early, Governor,' and the

other had the grace to answer: 'It is the early bird that catches the worm.' "

" 'Well, Governor Clark, I hope you will find it an easier seat than I have found it,' Houston said, and turning in the door he said: 'Good day, Governor C-l-a-r-k.' "

" 'Well, Swenson,' said Palm, "don't you think we are playing a dangerous game? I tell you no matter if we are ever so much citizens of Texas, if they are going to retaliate or statuate a punishment, or if the Union element is going to drop any one, or sacrifice any one in order to save themselves, don't you think it is likely it will hit a couple of defenseless foreigners first? Here is Texas, the seventh to join the Confederacy. What if we are looked on as rebels? My wife is so scared she can not sleep at night. And suppose a mob would rob the store? "

" 'Oh, I hope we have not come to that yet, Palm. We have done nothing so far but what the secession element have done themselves—political jobbery, that is all. We have as much right to our political views as our opponents. Besides, as long as Pease, Houston, Duval and others are not molested, we are not likely to be harrassed. But I am not going to replenish the stock unless I get that contract, and if you miss any money in the safe, you will know that it is put in safe-keeping somewhere, and that Shepherd in Houston has

the clue to the situation. If it becomes serious, we will have to close the store and wait for better times."

Then followed the Fort Sumter tragedy. The South was electrified.

"What do you think they will do to me, Mr. Swenson?" August Palm inquired one day. "They are talking about enlisting men, and they seem to take it for granted the young men ought to go first."

"But I need you here to go with the teamsters hauling goods."

"I know, Swenson, but what shall I do?"

"Can you not marry, August, and be a settled man? You have that nice little home where General Sidney Johnston has lived for nearly four years. Can't you marry and move in and be a settled citizen?"

So August married Miss Adele Atwood, a beautiful Austin belle in those days. But in a few months there were troubles again.

"Governor Lubbock says a young man like me should be out doing duty," he confided one day.

"Well, wait till they draft you for the army. If you go with the volunteers they will send you to the front. If you are drafted in you may be retained in your home State, and have a chance to see your family occasionally."

And in a few months August was drafted for duty

in his home State, and detailed with some more of his country-folks to forage for the army.

"Well, stick to your job faithfully, August, and keep your mouth shut. Come and see me when you have a furlough. Then you will come out all right. I guess, with Berryman, Holstrom, Bergstrom and others drafted, or going to be drafted, I will have to close the store soon."

Houston was getting ready to return to his home in Huntsville, and came to say good-bye to Swenson.

"All hope is not gone yet, Swenson," he said. "But I cannot communicate with anybody. My mail is tampered with continually! Same way with yours. The only way to get a communication under way would be if anyone could travel up North."

"Well, who should that be, General?"

"Haven't you and Sam Harris rheumatism continually, and couldn't you go up to Hot Springs, Arkansas? Wouldn't that be perfectly legitimate?"

"And take a letter from you and be searched and hung?"

"Letter nothing! Couldn't you scratch a few lines up there and manage a communication some way?"

"Well, perhaps so, General." And Houston departed.

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The following letter was written in the last year of General Houston's life:

“Cedar Point, August 14th, 1862.

“Private.

“My dear Colonel:

“I was delighted to hear of your safe return to Texas. You well deserve the honor of your scars. We were all happy to know your wounds were not mortal. May you long enjoy your honors in evidence of your country's gratitude.

“You could come down to the vicinity of Houston, but not extend your visit to the fish country, though I suppose there was a ‘little angling’ where you were. And hearing of your trips I was so much excited as to why you did not come to us that I could not suppress the following impromptu:

“How sweet the nectar on the lip.

The honey bee would fondly sip.

How sweet that dear enchanting smile,

That all the warrior's care beguiles.

Of these proud trophies earned in wars

Rich recompense of soldier's scars.

Who would not meet a hostile band

In hopes such treasures to command?

“So my dear Colonel, my muse was not asleep. I presume your trip was a pleasant one. I dare not ask, what was the result of it, but if I were ‘Paul Pry,’ I



should be very curious to know something about it. Of course, you know we would all be very glad to hear from you, as we regard you as one of our family. We would be delighted if you could visit us, and will try to give you some of the best oysters and fish in the bay. We live poorly, but we will try to dress our diet with a hearty welcome. Can't you come and see us?

"We will try to live quietly. I never leave my place without urgent business, and return the first moment I can command. Yet, I learn the Provost Marshals are especial in their inquisitions about matters that may transpire at my house or what the children may say, and their prattling. This gives me very little disquiet. I am at all times ready to answer for what my family do or say. Today, I have started an inquiry into some things I have heard. You may hear more of it by and by.

"It is not sufficient that we have given our sons and means to defend and support Southern Independence. The reason which I gave against Secession, and the prediction which I made, are still brought up in the minds of my enemies, and they cannot believe in my support of the cause, which is one now of life and death to us all. I may exclaim with Elijah: 'Lord, they have broken down thine altars, they have slain thy prophets, I alone am left and

they seek my life.' So it was in a perverse generation, and the human is the same now as it was then.

"If it were the will of my Heavenly Father, that I should enjoy a tranquil eventide of life, I would be thankful, but His will be done. I will request Mr. Harrell, who takes this letter to Austin, as we have no mails, to call on you, and deliver it with some little request. He is on business for the soldiers and if you can help him in forwarding it, please do so. He is sent by a meeting to obtain cloth at the penitentiary by the Governor. The order is to make cloth for the 'Bay Land Guards Company' from this neighborhood. They are nearly naked and destitute, having lost all at the battle of Shiloh, where we also lost our son, though we hope to reclaim him some day.

"All send love to you. Salute all our friends.

"Thy ever devoted,

"HOUSTON."

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Mrs. Swenson did not go out very much and the disturbed state of affairs worried her. It was therefore with great pleasure that Swenson brought his family over to Swente Palm's residence, one day for dinner, and to "spend the day" with the cultured Mrs. Palm and her sister, Miss Laura. The Palms

were childless, their only son, Swente Sture, having died at an early age.

A rainstorm coming up in the evening prevented the family from returning at the accustomed time. Swenson, contrary to his habit of wanting his family at home and around him at nightfall, seemed inclined to urge them to stay overnight in the city. He went home alone, and said he would send the carriage back in the morning.

"Funny," wondered Mrs. Swenson, "why Swenson is so particular about going home alone."

"Oh, he might have some letters or accounts to attend to, and wanted to have quiet around him."

"Well, could he not have done that in his private office upstairs here in town," Mrs. Swenson wondered.

"I have noticed," answered Palm, "that Swenson doesn't like to leave town alone after it is dark, and he may think some one ought to be at home during the night. It will do you good to be out a little now and then, Mrs. Swenson. I wouldn't worry."

Meanwhile Swenson disposed of a good sized bundle on coming home and dispatched Aleck for a grubbing hoe and a shovel.

"Put them here on the porch, Aleck."

"Gonna hab a fishin' party, Marse Swenson?"

"Yes, you can dig some bait in the morning, Aleck.

But I want a long pole. One that will reach as high as the housetop."

"Lawd amassy, gwine to set trotlines?"

"Maybe so."

And Aleck returned about dusk with a nearly straight sapling ten feet long.

"That will do. Leave it on the porch. Is Augusta with her folks?"

"Yas, sir."

"That will do, now you may go."

Swenson sat down and tried to read. Over from the little home of Gustav Palm, came merry voices, singing, laughing and having fun. What a blessing it is, he thought, to be a happy, carefree child—so different from the heavy yoke that is put on in manhood. What a strife, hustle and bustle, distrust and stratagem is crowded into a man's life. He felt weary, and listless, soul and body sick. It hurt him to sit still, and the aching joints, especially his knees, hurt him when he moved around. Did not the peasants in the Old Country lead a better, healthier, more care-free life? To be sure they did. But, he would hate for all that, to be chained to that monotoneous, heavy grinding work they had lived through, generation after generation.

He dozed in his chair and dreamed of a big mercantile establishment somewhere, where everybody was

pleasant and honest. Where the goods rolled in from ships on one side, and rolled out to customers on the other side, and August was pumping a huge pump, from which twenty dollar gold piece flowed in one continuous stream, and he was digging holes in the ground to hide them in.

He woke with a start. The candle was out. It was dark. Over in Palm's cabin all was still. The clock in the dining room struck twelve. He struck a match and lighted a new candle, pulled down the shades at the windows, and went out for the hoe and spade. It was a starlight night, the air was moist and his joints ached worse than ever.

"Never mind, old man," he grunted to himself, "it has to be done."

He pried loose the bricks in the fire place, and picked them out one by one. Then he started to dig a hole underneath. It was rather soft and not as hard as he imagined it to be. He dug until he thought it deep enough, then he deposited one of the heavy tin boxes in the hole. He looked into the box to see that everything was all right. That the slip on which was written, \$10,000 by actual count," was laid on top. Then he covered the box with a piece of ducking and put the dirt back. He tamped and tried to get the dirt back again, but had a considerable heap of it left.

“Well, I will have to dispose of that so it will not create any suspicion,” he muttered. “Now for the other fireplace.” And after the same procedure, the second box was deposited. He swept and cleaned up the dirt and threw it at one end of the house where a dried-up flower bed had been. Then he dug with the hoe so as to make it appear he had been digging for worms, and mixed the different dirt together. Next he washed with a bucket of water the fireplace, the walls and the bricks where he had worked, and last, he went outside and prodded the shingles next to the chimneys.

“That will give the appearance of rain doing this mischief, and in the morning, I will call in the Dutch mason and explain to him what I want him to do. It is better the family goes fishing tomorrow like Aleck planned.”

So in the morning, after a few hours fitful sleep, he called up Aleck, and told him to hustle for some worms for bait.

“You start to dig for them out there,” he said, pointing to his previous work. “I am tired of digging.”

Aleck started with a frown on his face.

“Marse Swenson,” he was soon calling. “I can’t find nary a worm thar.”

“Can’t you?”



“Naw, sor. I got tu go down tu de creek an dig ‘em.”

“Well, go on then.”

He ordered the carriage and a big wagon for the children and provisions, invited the Palm family with Augusta to go along to help take care of them, wrote a note to tell his wife how the water had mussed up things at home and how he intended to have the mason to come over and fix up a little. They had better be out of the way. At dinner or later in the evening, he would join them at the river.

“Well, I think I remember the fireplaces leaked a little,” remarked Mrs. Swenson, “but what had the stone mason to do with that? Old Jackson can fix that in a little while.”

And Old Jackson was detailed by Swenson to fix it, while the mason was instructed to fix the bricks in the fireplace.

“Seems to me, Mr. Swenson, like somebody been fooling with these shingles. Looks to me like somebody been knocking them lose from beneath.”

“Well, maybe the boys have been throwing rocks at them.”

“Wall, mebe, mebe so.”

Ernest, the mason, looked critically at the ceiling and at the wet bricks.

“These bricks have been laid loose on top of the

dirt," Swenson explained, "and the children will pick them up and play with them. I want you to bring good strong mortar and set them in so they won't come loose again. It is the same with the other fireplace. See that you make a good job of it right away, Ernest."

"Yaas, sorr, I vill make dem stay ven I ged done vid dem, Mester Swenson."

And Ernest made a "goot yob" of it as later witnesses can testify.

Swenson cleaned and wiped away the last stain of that ruinous rain. Jackson declared that "no muckle" rain was ever going to find its way through the patches he had made, and Swenson was satisfied that he had made a safe deposit of his funds for the time being.

\* \* \* \* \*

There were at least two in the party that went to Hot Springs, Arkansas, but they did not stay very long. They tried their best to establish a communication with Washington, and failed. In less than three weeks, they were back again, watched and distrusted more than ever.

Ex-Governor Pease was allowed to go on the streets unmolested, but cut off from all activity in public life. Gruesome stories would sometimes be told about

lynchings or skulls knocked in by zealous secessionists in their endeavor to enlist men for the army.

One night when Swenson was returning home later than usual, he noticed some riders following him in the outskirts of town. He gave his big gray racer the full use of his liberty, and the buggy and animal came homeward at top speed. In a furious gallop they tried to overtake him, calculating that they could rope him at the gate, but the calculating mind of Swenson had long before ordered Magnus to be at the gate and have it open as soon as the twilight fell. Perhaps it was the rheumatism that prompted this ordinance—the fact is the gate was open—Swenson went through like lightning. Old Magnus slammed the gate in place, and some fast riders came suddenly to a dead stop.

“That is the way a good, faithful servant can save his master from a whole lot of trouble,” Swenson complimented him. “But we will say nothing to Mrs. Swenson. It will do no good and it will make us all uncomfortable to talk about it.”

The only one that Swenson confided the attack to, was Palm.

“I think,” he said, “it will be best for me to leave for Mexico for awhile. But it must be on account of my rheumatism, and you must let that be the sole reason for my departure. We will let the store stay closed,

and you can have all the time you want to devote to your books. Have you heard anything in regard to your Consulship? It would be a good thing to have it established. It would be a kind of protection for not only our countrymen, but also for yourself."

"No, I have not heard anything as yet. But if I am going to take charge of the business, you will have to appoint me agent for your interest also."

"All right, I will do that."

"I thought I would never mention it to you, Swenson, but I happened to overhear some conversation the other night that made me feel uncomfortable. Two officers going by me in the dark, one remarked:

" 'Senator Iverson advises some Brutus to assassinate Houston. It would be a relief to get rid of him,' and the other said: 'If they would assassinate that d—d Swenson at the same time, they would do us a double service.' "

"Who were they?"

"I am not sure that one of them was not Colonel S——."

"Well, he is a bitter enemy of mine anyway," Swenson said. "I think it is best for me to go. I'm tired of going to that drill, and be taught right and left like a raw recruit. And the worst of it all is, the humiliating treatment one receives. Sam Harris says he is going along with us to the hot springs in

Monterey, Mexico. But he has some business to attend to in San Antonio first. I will go over and see our folks on Brushy creek before I go."

"Well, do," urged Palm. "See if you cannot get the Munson's to move over here; that would be some reliable help at least."

"In the meanwhile, Palm, remember, Shepherd has all the documents. They will explain how and where funds are invested. Let the renters put in plenty of corn and feedstuff, so no one need go hungry. The rents from the hotel and other property, will cover running expenses. You have been my true friend, Palm. God bless you for it."

Then he burst into tears and sobbed: "If I only knew of a safe place for Sue and the children, I would gladly sacrifice all I have in this paltry town. But I don't know of a more secluded, out-of-the-way place than Go Valle. I cannot see that she and the children have anything to fear. But remember, Palm: My wife must always think that I went for my rheumatism, as well as everybody else.

So Swenson rode out to Brushy creek to see his folks. They had done well during their stay there, and "Aunt Anna" would have been perfectly satisfied but for the war and that her boys were taken for the army service.

"It seems like, Swenson," the poor woman sobbed,





S. ALBIN SWENSON





"that as soon as you get a little bit settled and get things in shape, then comes some more trouble on top of it. Here are the Munsons and Larson and Christiansons and Nelsons and others all drafted for the army, and the women almost crazy. They came and took Johannes Munson in the field from his work, and Johanna, his wife, came running after him with one child in her arms and one running beside, holding to her skirt. Next day we had to pick up the bloody form of two of our neighbors with heads crushed to pulp, and bury them the best we could. I tell you, Swen, it makes me sick. This is a terrible country. I wish to God I had never come here."

"Well, Aunt Anna," Swenson tried to console her, "I have tried to do all I can, but these things are beyond my control. I might have to get out of the country myself in order to be out of harm's way. We all have our troubles to bear and God knows my own don't seem to be the lightest. But we will all try to tide over. Better times are coming again. And my firm conviction is that the North will win, but you must not say it so that anybody can hear you. Let us try to have patience and trust in God."

"Well, if we only could have a minister and preaching like we had in the Old Country," the sad woman replied, "then it would not be so hard, but here we are like sheep without a shepherd."

“I know, I know, Auntie, but as true as God liveth, if times had been otherwise, our people would have numbered hundreds in these parts, and we would have had some preaching in our native tongue, but I repeat it: I cannot help it, Auntie.”

\* \* \* \* \*

So he went and visited Annie, his sister, and her husband before returning. Dyer was vehement in his denunciations of the northern tyranny and the blockade, and thought if only England and France would recognize the Southern Confederacy, the tide could be turned yet.

“Well, Dyer,” Swenson said, “we will not argue that point now. I may never see you nor Annie again, but if that is the case, these four hundred acres are yours and your children after you. The papers and deeds will show it.” And with an affectionate good-bye and a heavy heart, he went home again to Austin.

\* \* \* \* \*

There were quite a few tears and many fond embraces, many a “remember dear” and “don’t forget” to the little ones, the morning when the ambulance with two good, swift and strong mules were standing at the Swenson home in Go Valle. Judge Morrill, Sam Harris, and Morgan Hamilton, (brother of Jack Hamilton, who was a commissioned officer in

the Federal army with a price set on his head), were sitting out in the vehicle waiting for him. A grip for each of the gentlemen and some provisions tucked in, completed the baggage brought along.

There were quite a few remarks exchanged, about "rheumatism" and "Hot Springs." Jackson and Aleck had a few instructions and the party were off for the long journey to Monterey, Mexico. On the porch Mrs. Swenson with the little Nora on her arm, was standing, waving her handkerchief as long as a similar one could be seen from the ambulance. When it passed out of sight, she went in and sat down for a good cry. Everything seemed dark and hopeless. The October sky was hazy with the Indian summer. The trees were shedding their red and yellow tinted leaves. The landscape, below towards the river, laid in its fall colors so still, almost suggesting that something terrible was going to happen, and on the west side rose the unfinished building with its doors and window frames set in, silhouetted against the sky—abandoned. So Swenson's dream of a magnificent home on the hill was frustrated. Would he ever come back? She had with her womanly instinct divined that there was more than Swenson's rheumatism behind this journey, but she had made it a rule never to interfere with her husband's business. He had given her to understand that nothing was left undone,

that would insure their welfare whether he lived or died, and some secrecy was almost necessary, in order to transact money business in these troublous days. So she let him go and come, plan and decide unmolested. She knew she was protected, even without knowing exactly how or by whom. What more could she demand. And she tried to dry the tears and devote herself to her children.

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The party arrived at Brownsville, minus Sam Harris (who had some urgent business calling him to San Antonio), one of the first days in November, and in less than two weeks Mrs. Swenson had a letter from her husband, telling about everything but his rheumatism. Well rheumatism is a very changeable affliction, often forgotten under great excitement, and maybe a change of climate would prove beneficial to him.

But before we submit some of his letters from Mexico we must relate an incident that cast additional gloom over the home life on the Swenson homestead.

John, one of Gustav Palm's oldest sons, going on his seventeenth year and old enough to be of some help to his father, came home one night heart-broken. He had brought up his little pony and the rather undersized boy avowed and declared his intention of going to Mexico also. There were some loud and ex-

citing conversation carried on over in the Palm cabin, and Mrs. Swenson wanted to know what was up.

"I want my shirts, and that ten dollar coin, that is mine," John was saying to his mother—Palm being detained in town and not present.

"But, my dear boy, what has happened?" The mother tried to calm him.

"Oh, they have been talking for several weeks in town, that a young man like me is big enough to be enlisted in the army," John blubbered like his heart was going to break. "It makes me feel so bad, mamma, that I can't stand it no longer."

"For pity's sake, John, you are no bigger than a twelve-year old boy. Taking you for a soldier? You must be mistaken," Mrs. Swenson interrupted.

"No, I am not," John asserted. "I wouldn't mind so much, but they curse at me, and say, 'That d——d fellow is big enough to carry a gun and be sent to the front.' I am going away from such people." And rolling his two shirts into a hard little roll, he tied it on to the saddle.

Mrs. Palm looked on in helpless resignation, while the tears dropped fast and hot from her eyes.

"Good-bye, mother!" he cried and kissed her and the other children passionately.

"Well, John," consoled Mrs. Swenson, "if you



are really going, try to go to Monterey and find Mr. Swenson, then you will have, at least, one who you will know down there."

"Poor boy," she said and turned to the pale mother, as he mounted his pony and rode away in the darkness, "I think he will turn back and come home again before morning."

But John did not come back. He tried to ford the river where there were no guards and came near drowning himself and the little pony in the deep water. He rode in wet clothes. He made the long journey alone and on reaching Mexico was finally drafted for Maximilian's army, but he never found Swenson.

But the poor mother wrung her hands like Jacob of old, and said: "William is taken out in the war; John is lost in the wilderness. Oh, what a terrible country to come to. I wish to God we had stayed at home."

(Ed. note:—"John" escaped from the Maximilian's army in Mexico and is today affiliated with one of our banking institutions in Austin, grayheaded, trusted and respected.)

## CHAPTER XIV

### LETTERS FROM MEXICO.

Swenson wrote more than a dozen letter to his wife, besides many others, during his stay in Mexico.

“Matamoras, Mexico, Nov. 3, 1863.

“My dear wife:

“On our way hither I have written you three pencil notes, advising you of our progress. On Saturday, the 31st, we arrived at Brownsville without any remarkable feature contrary to the ordinary travel in an almost unsettled country, such as camping, cooking, standing guard at nights, etc. As we neared the Rio Grande we met quite a number of trains of Government stores, carriages, etc. All advised us to make Brownsville that night, as it was deemed unsafe to camp out, and because one of Col. Duff's companies, commanded by a Capt. Vidal, had mutinied, killed one of the Colonel's express men and wounded another, and subsequently murdered seven other persons. It is currently believed that Capt. Vidal intended to take and burn Brownsville, consequently the excitement had been and was very intense.

We made no permanent stay at Brownsville, as Col. Duff very kindly gave me and Mr. Morrill a permit to cross the river with our mules and ambulance. Mr. Brush obtained a similar permit from another officer, and in company with him, we crossed the river in time to obtain lodging at 'Hotel de Matamoras.' I am also under great obligations to Col. Latham for marked courtesy and assistance. We arrived in Brownsville at a very propitious time, as just previous to our arrival the Government officers had impressed all the teams in, and about the town, and on yesterday, for reasons which I will tell presently, similar impressments were rigorously enforced.

"I find Matamoras a very much larger town than I had expected, ordinarily containing, I am told, about 12,000 inhabitants; but now evidently about half as many more. The place is semi-Spanish, semi-American in appearance; it is very dusty, very busy and very lively. The population now seems to be a jumble of all countries and languages. The greatest number are Americans and renegade Texans. Of Texans not so situated, I have heard it estimated as high as 3,000, but I suppose that this must be an exaggeration. But everywhere I hear English spoken, and I have been saluted as an acquaintance, by at least 200 people, most of whom I do not know; but all seem to be very well informed as to who I am

—saying that I ought to know them, etc. Mr. Alexander was here recently from New York, and quite a number from Austin and its vicinity, and daily new arrivals are to be seen, chiefly mechanics and persons averse to military exercise. On yesterday and today, I have seen the heroic S—— of Austin, dressed up as a civilian; but I presume that he is a Confederate soldier when he is on the other side. Mr. Swisher and Johnny remained at Brownsville, and I have not seen them since Saturday.

“On Sunday, Mr. M——and self attended high mass in the cathedral, and in the evening we were attracted by music; and, prompted by some Austin friends, we walked in the direction of the music, where we found a ‘Fan-dango’ in full operation out-of-doors in a public square. We gazed at this novel sight of thousands of dancers, with Mexicans and Americans looking on for an hour. We were impressed with the great decorum of it all, and the apparent enjoyment of all the participants. The higher classes do not take part in the dances; they only look on, and promenade around the immense arena of joyous and polite people of low degree. Not a harsh word was heard, not a drunken person seen; and no want of the most rigid propriety (as a dancing party). As to the propriety of Sunday evening being thus spent, needs no comment.

“Yesterday being a feast day, all business should have been suspended and all stores and shops were actually shut, but by breakfast time, the whole town was thrown into an intense excitement, particularly among the Americans, on account of a report that from 13 to 16 U. S. vessels had arrived at Point Isabel, about 25 miles from Brownsville. As the day advanced, the reports became more frequent, confirming and enlarging on this previous statement until late last night, when it was stated that about 5,000 U. S. troops had landed during the day; and all day the utmost hurry and confusion and excitement prevailed, owing to the evacuation of almost everything movable in Brownsville. This is still going on. Yesterday afternoon I went to the river opposite Brownsville, and remained there for four hours reviewing the hustle and confusion attendant upon the evacuation of the town. In Brownsville, I could see the effects of precipitate haste; and two ferry boats and three skiffs continually transporting cotton and merchandise across the river, carrying it across in every shape, some in open boxes, some in barrels, in sheets, and some as loose furniture. Women and children, cradles, clocks, crockery, provisions, cooking utensils, all in a jumble. Only the men and teams were detained (except Jews, whom I suppose are either not considered as men, or are endowed with superior

privileges and immunities). I understand that similar movements kept up during the night, and even this morning. A stream of non-combatants and their movables were still pouring into this hospitable city. God only knows where they will all find shelter. The room (a very small one) which we occupied at the hotel, was taken by three grown ladies, and I don't know how many babies, small dogs, trunks, band-boxes, carpet bags, etc. But I know that the room is very small, very uncomfortable and not large enough for two men with their ordinary baggage.

“Today it is reported that the landing of Federals at Point Isabel is still progressing; that Gen. Bee (Confed) has left Brownsville, and that the two cannons have been sunk in the river, that no opposition will be made to Federal possession of Brownsville, etc., but rumors are very erratic, and I do not know whether to credit them or not. There is no doubt, however, that the Confederate force in Brownsville is much too small to effect a new obstruction to the military occupation of the U. S. forces, and as I have no opportunity to send this letter now, I may add something more respecting the result.

“Mr. Buas has established himself at the mouth of the river on this side. He came up last night, confirming the arrival of the fleet; and we intend to visit the mouth of the river for the purpose of sea bathing,



eating oysters, etc., and next week to resume our journey to Monterey for the benefit of the springs in that vicinity. My health has been excellent until last night when I was attacked by a very severe spell of colic which made me very sick for a few hours; but I feel quite well now, except the weakness which follows such paroxysms. There is no very late news from the U. S. Rosecrantz is represented to be at Chattanooga, heavily reinforced by Burnside and Sheridan. The battle is represented to have been very severe, the Federals losing in prisoners and the Confederates in killed and wounded. The latter are said to have lost 12,000 men, the former about an equal number including prisoners.

“Brig. Gen. A. J. Hamilton with his staff, is announced as having arrived at New Orleans on the 14th of October; and it is said here that he is the U. S. military governor of Texas and in great favor with the administration. He is reported as very temperate in his habits, sober-minded, and practical in his views. This much I overheard in conversation with a gentleman who has been with him very much of late; but in making statements of what I hear,\* I always bear in mind that the speaker is not able to stand re-

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\*The rumor was true, although Gen. Hamilton was not inaugurated as Provisional Governor until 1865, or over 19 months afterward.

sponsible for his utterances. All reports agree that Texas is to be invaded this winter, and that large armies are now moving on Texas.

“Mr. F—— is here; he is very polite. We have an invitation to his house. Mr. Freeman is also here. Tell Sam Harris our quondam acquaintance, Capt. M——, is here, wearing the identical uniform which glittered at the ‘Springs,’ but is somewhat the worse for wear. I wish Harris was with us; tell him that the springs of Monterey are said to be excellent for rheumatism, and the distance from San Antonio is not very great, and I am told that the route is perfectly safe. I wish that I had taken that route, though it is not very much shorter, but evidently equally as safe as via this city.

“Dear wife, I intended to have written more before sending you this letter, but as I find an opportunity to send it by Mr. De Navarro of San Antonio, I will only add my love to you, the children and all. Tell the children to be good and may God in his mercy protect you and me. I shall write again before leaving Matamoras, but it is doubtful whether I can get any conveyance after today.

“Farewell, my dear, dear wife.

“Yours affectionately,

“S. M. SWENSON.”

“P. S. Owing to the general breaking up and the

turning back of teams now on the roads and the general impressment of all conveyances on the other side, I have no hopes of being able to send you any of the things that you want, nor anything to any of your friends.

“S. M.”

After writing a letter of one thousand or fifteen hundred words in length Swenson often closed the letters to his family with the desire to write “more.” For the sake of not wearying the reader, we will just take extracts from two or three letters. In a letter dated Monterey, Dec. 11th, 1863, he says, among other things:

“I have received a letter from Mr. Aquierre, whom you may remember was once at our house in company with Mr. Alexander and two Mexican gentlemen. He very kindly invited me to his house in Saltillo, and he insists that I shall not only come, but also let him know beforehand, that he might meet me upon my arrival. He says that if the weather is too cold for me in Saltillo, he will take me to an hacienda belonging to his family near Parras, where, he says, I shall be equally welcome; or if I like it, he will accompany me to San Luis Potosi, where he has to go about the 1st of January. He has written to Governor Vidauri, and other gentlemen in my behalf; and I have in that way been overwhelmed with court-

esy for his sake. Among the gentlemen who have called on me today was the Secretary of State, who told me that Mr. Aquierre was of one of the first families in Mexico. (Mexico, like Virginia, has its first families.) I regret that I have done so little to merit the attention of these men, although I feel grateful for their courtesy; but I sincerely hope that it may not be too late to reform in this respect.

“Yesterday evening I took tea with Mr. U. formerly of San Antonio. And I have seldom met a more agreeable couple than he and his wife. His father-in-law was also there. I suspect that they are refugees, but they are too considerate to express any harsh feeling or discontent with their former neighbors, although I was told today that the old gentleman was only allowed twenty-four hours to prepare for his departure.”

From Parras, dated January 11th, 1864, we quote the following:

“About two weeks ago, I received an invitation to visit the hacienda of San Rosario, which belongs to the family of Senor Aquierre; and as Don Eugenio also intended to visit this paternal estate, I cheerfully accepted the invitation. This estate joins the city of Parras, and I dated this letter from Parras; but I am on the hacienda ‘San Rosario.’ Today a week ago, we set out from Saltillo in an ambulance ac-

accompanied by ten servants and a drove of mules for change. In order to give you an idea of the movement of a Mexican 'Grandee,' I will somewhat minutely describe the journey without any pretensions whatever to describe the magnificent mountains and the scenery, or the rich plains, such as the battle fields of Buena Vista (where Gen. Taylor with 4,759 men, met and defeated Santa Anna's army of 20,000 in 1847), and Angosture, or the ranches along the road.

"Well, as to our royal mode of traveling—we breakfasted at 12 o'clock in Saltillo before we started, and then traveled at the utmost speed, in company as stated, until sundown. A courier was sent ahead at full speed, while we traveled a little more leisurely, to advise the Major Domo of the hacienda of our approach, and to ask the favor of staying over night.

"We were sumptuously entertained and well lodged; and the next morning after taking coffee, we continued our travel in the 'Gilpin' race style until about 11 o'clock, when another courier was dispatched to the rancho 'Sequiem,' asking the favor of its proprietor, Senor Pena, to provide us with breakfast, which this fat and jolly and very dark *caballero* did in a most sumptuous way, insisting that I should occupy the seat of honor at the table, while he, Senor Pena, busied himself in supervising the rapid serving

of a multitude of dishes, to all of which we were well prepared to do full justice, as well as to the wine, which is most lavishly used here in every house.

“After breakfast we embraced our good-natured and hospitable host, and mounted the carriage for a continuation of our journey.

“At two o’clock we were met by fifteen mounted and armed servants of the hacienda who had awaited our arrival on the line of their immense possessions, which are more than 100 square leagues. With this additional force we continued ten or twelve leagues when we were again met by two carriages containing the following: the brother of the Senors Don Eugenio, namely, the Don Pedro Aquierre, Senors Santas, Pena and some other gentleman mounted on horseback. Here we all got out of the ambulance for the ceremony of introduction, embracing, etc. In the foremost, Mr. Aquierre was seated together with the dignified and aged Senor Pena (who is a brother of the gentleman at whose house we breakfasted). I forgot to state that we had the company from Saltillo of Don Narcisso Aquierre and Senor Zepa—relatives of Don Eugenio. After continuing the journey for another league or two, we reached this magnificent Hacienda. Don Eugenio and myself are lodged at the house of Senor Santas, but the whole family congregates here at meal time.



“I would like to describe the further reception by the ladies as well as the magnificent estate with its immense fields, its numerous herds, its square miles of vineyards, cotton factory and mills; its abundance of water tanks, waterfalls, extensive plantation, shade trees, gardens, shrubbery, etc., but I will tell you presently why I have not time to write a very long letter.\*

“In the vicinity there lives a very rich man whose name is Don Leonardo Zuluaga. His possessions are so immense that even the numbers of his ranches and haciendas are not known here. He is said to possess between five hundred and one thousand leagues of land. This gentleman has been in great trouble on account of his neighbors settling on the confines of his lands, having confederated together in the number of two or three thousand; they have robbed him of 40,000 head of his stock, burned some of his ranches and destroyed many thousands of bushels of grain. And to check these deprivations, the government has sent an army of 1000 men. These rancheros who have turned into robbers had obtained through mistake a grant from the government of land which proved to run over a portion of Mr. Zuluaga's estate, thus giving them a show of title and some excuse for

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\*The letter contained 1600 words.

their bad deeds; and in the revolutionary condition of this country, the government cannot afford to keep an army here for the protection of Mr. Zuluaga. It is therefore very desirable to pacify these rancheros and end the war. To effect such a happy result, Don Zuluaga was importuned by all parties as well as by the government to go to the frontier of this state (Coahuilla) and treat with these robbers; and after promising to go, I was invited to become one of the party. I was very glad to accept, as it gave me an opportunity to see more of the country, as well as to be witness to such a novelty as a treaty with a band of robbers in open rebellion, who have suffered extensively in two engagements with the government troops. We therefore repaired four days ago to the hacienda 'San Loranzo,' being the nearest to this place owned by Mr. Zuluaga. And at this establishment, among other interesting matters, I met with a school-mate of Judge Duval, who is a brother-in-law of Mr. Zuluaga's—I think that his name is 'Lano.' (I shall not stop to tell you of this estate or of any other minutia except that we traveled with a large armed force besides the servants of the Senor Zuluaga.) We reached the town of Alamo or Via de Viesta without harm, and on our arrival there about dark, the people were in waiting and were 'hurrahing' for 'Don Leonardo.' The soldiers presented arms; the music-

ians (brass band) played some national airs; and when I alighted from the carriage and was presented to General Hinojosa (formerly Minister of War, Governor of Mexico, etc.) the tune was changed to 'Yankee Doodle,' which very much amused us all. I found Don Leonardo Zuluaga a most companionable gentleman, very much like your father in size and appearance, but full of fun and good humor. He speaks English fluently, and I have the happiness to know that he confessed to General Hinojosa that I had persuaded him to make the concession and to be generous and forgiving; and General Hinojosa, who is apparently childlike in his disposition and very kind and benovolent in his nature, treated me like a brother. The difficulty being settled, we had an evening of rejoicing at the headquarters of General Hinojosa, and this morning very early we left the confines of the State of Durango and after traveling all day, using relay after relay of mules, we arrived here at dark, leaving Don Leonardo at his hacienda. Tomorrow morning, Senors Aquierro and Zuluaga are to go to Monterey and for that reason I am sitting up writing to you.

"May God grant us all his merciful favors and trusting in His goodness, I feel that it is now more than ever my duty to fall down on my knees and adore Him. \* \* \*"

Fearing that these abstracts may create the impression that Swenson was vain and sought to appear prominent when away from home, we submit another letter from Monterey, dated Dec. 6th, 1863:

“I left Matamoras in company with Mr. Brush and his son and two Mexican gentlemen, on the 28th of November; and we arrived here on the 2nd of December, without any accident or adventure, save the injury of a foot apiece, of the driver and whipper attendant on the stage.

“The country from Matamoras for forty leagues is level, sterile, wild and dry; not a drop of rain has fallen (save near Matamoras) for three years past, consequently no grass was seen until we reached the irrigated land near the mountains. For fifty leagues in this direction, the country is undulating and sometimes hilly, very much resembling the Barton creek country, save the want of grass. The road, however, is very good with few hills, but a gradual ascent, and is constantly in view of the Sierra Madre mountains, for the whole distance of fifty leagues. We traveled very fast in the daytime, stopping at the ranches at night. The accommodation at these stopping places is poor. We had some provisions with us, otherwise our fare would have been very bad. The passengers usually slept on the dirt floor, but I managed to hire beds for two nights. The people are poor

but very polite, accommodating, and hospitable with their scanty means. And on the ranches I believe that they are honest. At any rate we lost nothing out of the multitude of loose baggage which always remained in the stage at night; and it was never watched by us. The driver, however, slept in the stage at night. The weather was very cold when we left Matamoras, and continued so until we reached this place; and as the Mexican houses, or rather huts, have no fireplaces, we felt the cold, which was below freezing, very keenly. The Mexicans, however, placed live coals of fire in the middle of the floor and we squatted down around the spot; thus we were made comfortable.

“We crossed two or three rivers on our way—all as dry as a powder horn; but they showed signs of having had water there at no distant period. Some of the ranches were quite populous, and in Texas could be called towns, considering the number of inhabitants. We passed through one city—La Guadarrama—which is situated near the mountains and is only six hours drive from this city. La Guadarrama is a beautiful place and exceedingly clean; the streets were well paved and the yards, which are large, were planted with orange trees, shrubbery, etc. The plaza is a luxurious lounging place, also set out with orange trees, oleander and other shrubs which grow here into



respectable sized trees. Willie Brush picked up the golden fruit from the ground, and I bought a dozen of the finest oranges I ever saw for one 'bit'. The city is irrigated from a mountain stream which encircles the place and also serves to irrigate a large scope of the country around the town.

"The day that we arrived at La Guadarita, we had nothing to eat until 3 p. m. except, meeting a Mexican with a number of asses loaded with fruit from whom we bought a variety of fruit compressed into cakes such as figs, and the fruits of the two species of cactus, walnuts, apples, etc.

"From La Guadarita to Monterey, we wound around the mountain frequently, through lanes of oranges, shrubbery and cactus. The fields were burdened with crops of sugar cane, corn in roasting ears, and various other stages of growth, also barley and oats just up, but beautifully green; this was most refreshing after having seen nothing but parched lands or chaparral, or at best only forests of mesquite, ebony rantana and ouisatche brush, with here and there a tall tree, the name of which I do not know. Palm trees are growing on the hills. Along the road every mile or so, there is a cross which marks the place where some poor fellow has come to an untimely end—the unfortunate victim of revenge or cupidity. In this line of Mexican accomplishment, I witnessed



on the road a fellow bare-headed and pursued by two horsemen, who overtook him when he got directly opposite our stage. I was looking out at the time, and saw the foremost pursuer fire upon the unfortunate culprit, whom I afterward learned had stolen something; but our 'cochero' did not slacken the speed of our Gilpin race; so I could not ascertain the fate of the thief.

"It is astonishing how far the little Mexican mule can go on the gallop. We had only two teams on the whole route and we traveled ninety leagues (a distance of 236.7 miles) in four days during the daylight.

"On my arrival here, I stopped at the 'Hotel de Francis y Americano,' kept by a Frenchman, or rather by his sturdy wife. She is the prime director of all affairs, as I afterwards learned from her husband, who, invariably, refers me to her in all questions of importance, such as getting a sheet or a pillow-case for the bare cot. The table and fare are excellent, the coffee superb, and the attendance at the hotel very good. The rest of the accommodation was very bad. I slept there one night with seven others (all Texans) in the same room; I had a cot without a mattress. A tallow candle's light dispersed the darkness so as to prevent our falling over each other in that jail-like, dismal apartment. On day before yesterday, I ob-

tained a very good room on one of the principal streets, with all the comforts and privileges appertaining to the establishment of a Mexican Grandee, such as a roomy court, a good well, etc. All were kept clean and neat. The room is about 18 feet square and about the same height, with a wall about four feet thick, iron grating outside the windows and thick oaken shutters inside, no window glasses. The door is equally substantial, the floor is cemented, clean and smooth; but no fireplace, which in this genial climate is a superfluity, except in extraordinary times as the few days mentioned; but here the cold could not have been so severe as it did not affect the sugar cane.

“I have furnished the apartment in a sumptuous manner, having a cot, a table, three chairs, a washbowl and pitcher; and I expect to be able to procure a mattresses and a pillow. I have also as a loan from my astute landlady of the hotel, a pair of sheets; so you see I am quite comfortable, and find Monterey thus far a delightful place. The distant mountains surround the city, varying in height from 5400 to 6500 feet. The houses are purely Spanish, but generally large, and here are many imposing structures of apparently great antiquity and many others still more magnificent under construction. The streets are regular, crossing at right angles, well paved, with good sidewalks, very clean, but rather narrow. The

population is about 30,000. The people are very quiet and exceedingly polite. The American residents are hospitable and I judge socially inclined. I dined with Mr. H. Smyth of San Antonio who is here with his family, and took tea yesterday at the house of another Texan, and I have several other invitations. One of my traveling companions, Sr. Don Miguel Martinez y Gardenas, has also shown us much attention, inviting Mr. and Mrs. Brush to call at his house. I had a letter of introduction to Governor Vidauri, which I presented at the palace, and I was overwhelmed with kindness and attention, protestations of friendship and offers of service as well as wishes that my stay in the city would prove agreeable to me.

“I was somewhat embarrassed, however, to be thought a refugee, which my poor stock of Spanish was hardly able to correct. The Governor having set the example, all the other officials at the palace were equally polite and civil; and one of them, whom I took to be the Secretary of State, accompanied me to the outer gate, conversing fluently in English.

“I called also at the residence of Mr. Frank Paschal, a sincere and ardent Southern man. He has a very pleasant residence and beautiful garden with an orange grove in the suburbs of the city, and on the street leading to the Bishop’s palace. He understood that his neighbor directly opposite had some rooms

to rent, and for that purpose we called there. He also mentioned that the property was for sale, and as the old Spaniard very politely invited us to view the premises, we walked through the grounds. It contained one labor (equals 177 acres of land) fronting about 600 yards on the street enclosed by a stone wall six or seven feet high. The buildings were ancient and cloister-like and apparently uncomfortable, but the ground is splendid. Ten or twelve acres are set with oranges, peaches, sweet lemons, fruit bearing cactus high as trees, bananas and some very large fruit trees, the name of which I do not remember, but Mr. Paschal said it bore a very delicious fruit, and the product is worth several hundred dollars per acre. Of orange trees, all of which were loaded with fruit, there were more than 500—standing in regular double lines with walks between and forming hollow squares, which squares were planted in cabbage, curry, pepper, lettuce, onions, radishes, sweet and Irish potatoes and ornamented with shrubbery, such as roses, oleanders, lillies (a specie as large as a shrub). The rest of the ground was in cane which grew to perfection. The cane was being cut and ground for sugar making. In a grove of shade trees there was a large water tank which answered the double purpose of bathing and irrigating the grounds. The tank was supplied from running water from a

stream near the Bishop's palace. This palace is immediately at the foot of the saddle peak of the Sierra Madre. There is no good land between this place and the mountain. The view is magnificent, the air bracing, and were there a permanent American population, it would be a very desirable place of residence. The Mexicans of the better classes are very exclusive and do not associate with the Americans. They are, however, very polite and polished in their manner and move in considerable style. At least, I judge so from their carriages, apparel, the kind of goods, and the furniture for sale in the stores, etc.

“I have commenced bathing in the hot springs one and one-half leagues distant, and I have no doubt the water is beneficial, though not so hot nor so abundant as in Arkansas; but I have improved so much while traveling that I do not feel the same anxiety that I formerly did. The springs are not much of a resort and are badly kept. In fact, there is no accommodation whatever, not even a towel, or a broom to clean the dirty floor in the dressing room; but I carried both with me and left the place clean, as well as much benefited myself. I bid adieu to the accumulated dirt, which is one of the permanent institutions in this magnificent country, and I may add, also, of the great mass of this magnanimous nation.

“Two days ago nine Texans arrived who had passed



through Austin on their way down; they stopped at the same hotel where I board. In the papers which they brought with them, I read the valedictory of Governor Lubbock and the inaugural address of Governor Murrah.

“I shall be exceedingly glad to know that you are all well. I fear that you have had cold weather and that you or the children may have taken cold. I sometimes imagine many unpleasant things in these troublous times. The best thing, my dear wife, is to exercise the prerogative of a good conscience, and not be afraid of anything. Stay at home, cultivate the friendship of our good neighbors, console yourself with the children, and above all, be cheerful and patient. Kiss the children and embrace them for me, and bid them be good. Remember me affectionately to all; my love also to Augusta and relatives. What I wish to express to you, I shall suppress, as it would no doubt be interesting to those who deem it their duty to peruse this letter, for I am told it is one of the precautionary measures of war to inspect letters, which is no doubt right in these perilous times.

“Adieu, my dear wife. May God bless you and protect you.

“Yours,

“SWENSON.”



From Monterey, February 28, 1864, we give the following extract of a letter:

“My dear wife:

“My last letter was from San Luis Potosi. \* \* \*  
I thank you for your kind letter of the 7th January and the 26th January, and, none the least, for the ambrotypes—the latter I can hardly keep from looking at every moment. My reason for risking this dangerous travel for more than 140 leagues was owing to my desire to get back to the frontier where I could possibly hear from you. On coming here I called also on the family of President Juarez, who send their compliments to you. The President, however, is sick and I did not see him. A war is brewing between him and Governor Vidauri, and it may break out any day here in Monterey. I passed the troops on the road between Saltillo and this place; but so far from molesting me I dined with the Colonel in command, and when I encountered Governor Vidauri’s scouts this side, they only questioned me as to what nation I belonged to, and let me pass with a courteous salutation. It is really remarkable that among all these conflicting parties all agree in showing kindness to a foreigner.

“At the dinner table today I met with Eugene Bremond, but I simply exchanged salutations with him. He looks very well indeed. Little Willie Brush

called on me; he is a well mannered and sweet little boy.

“Along with the letters I received here in Monterey is one from my brother and one from Dan Heard. Willie sends his love to Greta and Eric. All are well in Sweden. \* \* \* I am excited and bewildered with all my good news and the letters I have received. The only drawback is that little miserable newspaper squibble which is doubly false in one sentence, because, unlike the author, I never wore a mask. Consequently I have none to throw off and have as little clamored for subjugation as I have for secession. If any expression of mine can be tortured into such an idea, it has been an ardent desire for peace, and this I repeat from the bottom of my heart, and I envy not the feelings of any man who cannot say, Amen, thereto.

“But, my dear wife, do not let this disturb you, and if I was sure it did not, I should laugh right heartily at the puny effort to keep the good people of Texas advised that there is such a person as my humble self. \* \* \*”

Twice as much correspondence could be produced from Swenson's stay in Mexico, but the above will suffice.

With his usual shrewd business foresight, he decided not to return to Texas, but to establish com-

munication with the Swedish General Consul Count Piper in Washington and Consul Habbicht at New York; and through them and the Secretary of Treasury S. P. Chase, obtain permission to ship cotton to the North, being able to prove that previous to and during the war, he had been purchasing cotton on foreign account, and was now storing it at different places in Texas and Mexico. He advised August (his cousin) to collect all outstanding debts and convert the money into cotton. Cotton was then, on account of the rigorous blockade, very cheap in Texas; and the profits realized on it later proved enormous.

Swenson stayed in Mexico until June of 1865, his sojourn there being twenty months in all. With Judge Duval, his "comrade in exile," he arrived in New Orleans early in July, 1865.

Thus ended a sad, tedious, and trying chapter of Swenson's life in Texas.



"LITTLE NORA"



## CHAPTER XV

### NIGHTWATCHES.

The great disturbance as the Finnish folklore call the war of 1808-09 between Finland—unassisted by Sweden to which it belonged, and to which it looked for help and assistance—and Russia, when famine and pestilence claimed what the soldiers and the war had not destroyed, has been remembered from father to son, and even to grandchildren, as being a dark, dreary period when the torches failed to give light at night time, and the fire on the hearth, to warm the house. The period of the civil war in America was a dismal time, when no comforts of life could console the anxious minds of those who gathered around the tables at mealtime, or around the fireplace at night in the thousands of homes in the Southland. There was scarce a home from which some son, father, brother, or relative had not left. Who could feel cheerful, when life and death were in the balance? Who would not think about the dear ones, exposed, yes ragged, hungry, nay, perhaps, sick, and under



the bare heavens when a norther raged? And the battlefields with their tolls of precious lives, and the messages that came, telling of someone, who was never more to return. Who can picture the days of anxiety when battles were pending. And when the balance seemed at last to turn in favor of the Federal army? Then came the days of hardship for the poor and needy, when women had to take men's places, and try to find ways and means to procure food and clothing for the family. There were serious misgivings also in the circles of higher officials, when it was rumored that Gen. Hamilton was going to be provisional governor at the end of the war. More than one official planned for the same journey to Mexico, their own policy had compelled others to make. Surely there was not a house without a heartache in it. Food was not relished. Sleep was disturbed by terrible dreams. A nightmare was hovering over the fair, once so prosperous, Lone Star State. It was rumored that the old wounds of Gen. Houston were breaking out again, that he was dying, and finally, in the latter part of July, almost simultaneously with the news that Vicksburg had fallen, came the news that General Houston was no more.

"I don't care what they say," old Jackson defiantly remarked to Mrs. Swenson, as she watched him plant grapevines on the hillsides, "but they shore

treated General Houston dirty. Just to think what he has done for this country.”

“Hush, Jackson,” Mrs. Swenson said. “You must be careful what you say. Didn’t Swenson tell you to keep your mouth shut, when he went away? But here come old Mr. Grumble. I must read the greeting to him from Swenson, that will tickle the old man.”

Grumble was quite a character among the neighbors in those days, illiterate, selfwilled, and careless in expression, his old age granting him exemption from censure.

“Well, they’re licking them fireaters pretty hard I hear,” he managed to say as he stopped to catch breath. “Serves them right, py golly. Howdy, Mrs. Swenson.”

“Not so loud, Mr. Grumble, some one might hear you.”

“Let them hear it, py golly. I say lick ’em, lick ’em good. Don’t I remember how they done with Gen. Hamilton, his chile sick wid distemperate (diphtheria) an’ de General hidden in de cave up yonder and wanted to see dat chile so bad. Wad did dey do? Set out guards to ketch him in de nite time. An I jes go down der one mawning an’ seed three of dem guards asleep, sure as you’re bawn. An I jes steal up and grab de gun an poke dem in de ribs, sez

I, 'Ged up now you are my prisoners.' Oh Lawdy, Mrs. Swenson, you ought to hab seed dem." And the old man told his story for the twentieth time—no one could stop him.

"Well, Mr. Grumble," Mrs. Swenson managed to say, when he stopped for breath again, "Mr. Swenson wrote in his last letter and sent his compliments to you," and she read that part of the letter which said, "Present my compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Grumble, also let Mrs. Hamilton know that the General has arrived at his destination and has been dined most sumptuously."

"Py golly, dats fine," he exclaimed. "Much er-blighted, Mrs. Swenson"—and the old man started off towards the Hamilton homestead across the creek, and startled the whole household over there, by telling them that Col. Swenson had written from Mexico, telling Mrs. Swenson that the General was "dying consumptiously" in Mexico!

The quick despatch which was sent, post haste, to the Swenson homestead to learn the real truth, returned immediately and dispelled the consternation, and the first smile for a good long while flitted across the noble, heroic face of the wife of the General in exile.

"The old man will run around on those hills and get lost one day," one of the young girls remarked.

“Well, I have heard that Mrs. Grumble ties him down in a chair sometimes,” someone remarked, “to keep him from running around so much.”

“Some restraint would be necessary, if he runs around with such communications to his neighbors as we have received,” Mrs. Hamilton remarked.

“But he made you smile all right, mother.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Miss Mary Hamilton, sent by her mother, came over to Mrs. Swenson's one day in the fall of 1864. They were going to leave for New Orleans. Federal ships would meet them at Galveston or Columbia, and take them over. They wanted to say goodbye. “How satisfied I will feel, if we can only put our feet on Federal soil,” Miss Hamilton confided. “We managed to get the boys out of here before they were drafted for the army. And now, dear Mrs. Swenson, thank you ever so much for being such a good neighbor. I only wish you could go with us.”

There was a wistful look, and a few tears in Mrs. Swenson's eyes, as she answered: “Swenson says in his last letter that I must not be surprised if the next communication comes from Havana. Nothing is settled yet I understand. But if ever I get safely out of here, I will never come back. I never want to live near, or have to look at, that unfinished house, stand-

ing there as if it was haunted. But you may have to come back, Miss Hamilton, if rumors prove true."

"Oh well, 'there is many a slip'.—"

"But Goodbye. Goodbye." And so they went.

But how their sailing was prevented, and their home destroyed by fire, are part of another story not yet written.

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The Honorable Swente Palm, agent for the extensive interest of the Swenson properties had also his share of troubles. Some Confederate officers wanted to impress the Swenson buildings for Government and army purposes. Among other reasons enumerated, they claimed that they needed it to smoke and cure bacon in, for the army. When Palm demanded to be permitted to see the order from the superior commander, he was snubbed and told they would take it by force. They would batter down the doors, if he did not deliver the keys within a given time. It required all the diplomatic skill Palm had acquired in the Government service of the Old Country, and all the shrewdness he had learned in this State to evade serious complications. But with the assistance of the brilliant lawyer Paschal as his attorney, General Magruder, to whom he appealed for protection, interfered in the behalf of the Palm and the Swenson properties.

(In his bold application for protection to General Magruder, Paschal pointed out: "that it was a good building which had cost a liberal minded citizen probably a hundred thousand dollars to erect, that the dining room of the hotel would necessarily be on the second floor of the building with the bacon smoking underneath." He pointed out how other more suitable buildings had been offered, how a new cylinder press that no one knew how to take apart and set up again, was housed in the establishment, and wound up his presentation of the case with a sarcastic advice to the General, to send such martial sons to the front where real battles were to be found, instead of molesting peaceful citizens at home." The dismal, tragic night scene when fifteen armed men entered the Paschal home, under pretense that they wanted to escort him to General Magruder, to answer for his impudent and bold actions during the war, when he himself as well as the family apprehended the worst, is still remembered by some, who were present during that heartrending separation. The deputation, however thought it better to let him return to his family unmolested.)

While it is true that the Texas unionists loved their country too well to create any internal strife or rebellion, it is equally true that the secessionists with chivalrous courtesy hardly, if ever, molested



women and children. This is their unspotted "coat of arms"—kept clean, no matter what their sins otherwise might be, and it is this, that is the pride of the men of the south today. That excepted, it was war to the death with men opposed to Confederate ideals.

Thus it was a wonder that something did not happen to the man who was so distinctly then, as well as now, classed as "one of the leaders in the Union group of men."

Palm trembled a little, sometimes Mrs. Palm and Miss Laura took turns crying, and wished they could move home to the little old cramped town of Calmar, in Sweden, which seemed to them a most cozy and safe place. They had forgotten how like birds in a cage they had felt, in the old days gone by. They just had the memory of the safe old home nest, that was also found within the confines of that "cage." To be sure, we never know when we are "well off"—and then they cried a little bit more—and wrote brave letters home to old Captain Alm and the family in Calmar.

The afore mentioned determined policy which Palm and Swenson had agreed on to invest in land, whenever a good opportunity could be found, was closely adhered to. Numerous tracts of land scattered all over the State were purchased, sometimes for mer-

chandise, or for a small sum of money, land being considered almost valueless without improvements.

In this way they laid the foundation for their immense fortunes in later years, by having and exercising the sense which other men lacked.

\* \* \* \* \*

The spring of 1865 brought the astonishing news of President Lincoln's assassination, and later, the fall of the Southern Confederacy, and the appointment of General Hamilton as Provisional Governor of Texas. August B. Palm was back again, ready to take over the Swenson interests in the store. The Munsons, Nelsons, Christiansons, and others, together with several refugees from Mexico, were flocking back to their old home places. The fields, partly grown in weeds, were planted in some crop in the hope that favorable fall weather would help out what was lost of spring opportunities.

Mrs. Swenson, assisted by servants, renters, and the ever-ready Swente Palm, was managing, supervising, and planning from the hill. Never before had her administrative abilities been so extensively called into play. She planned for all the land to be planted in corn. It would be needed, no doubt. But she felt strangely weak, lonesome, and helpless sometimes. Then, one summer evening in July, Palm came with

a letter from New Orleans. It was in Swenson's handwriting.

“New Orleans, 2nd July, 1865.

“My dear wife:

“This morning early, I parted with my friend in exile, Judge Duval, who, with his family returns to Texas. After he was gone I had a spell of serious reflections,—natural to the occasion of separating from a friend, who has stuck closer than a brother.

“On yesterday morning I was attacked with diarrhea, which has weakened me very much, but I am better now. Am sitting up, no doubt entirely restored except that I am quite weak. This is the reason I did not write to you yesterday, as I had intended. I wrote to Uncle last night and sent it by Peterson and Mr. Morril, both of whom left yesterday.

“Rev. Gillette is here. I am sorry I can not go to church to hear him today. I think it would be imprudent to stir about. Duval Beall is here and is kind enough to take this note to Judge Duval, who is detained because the boat has no sailing orders. He and other friends will call on you and tell you more than I can tell you in a letter.

“God bless you, my dear, dear wife. Kiss the children and write to me soon.

“Your affectionate husband,

“SWENSON.”

Then came some more letters from New Orleans, and some verbal messages through the Duvals and Morrills, when they arrived. An informal dinner for the Palms; a few good-bye visits, and on a beautiful fall morning the whole family, with packed trunks, all preliminaries disposed of, were ready to leave for New Orleans.

Mrs. Swenson stopped on the porch and cast a last glance around. "Well, good-bye, old place," she nodded towards the half-finished ruin and whispered something, while Augusta and Edla tried to get the children in the hack. "I'll never, never, want to come back and live over again the last three years," she said to herself. "It has been like standing guard during a long dark night. But come, children, let us go."

But Eric was giving some information to Holmstrom. Greta wanted to lock the door to her playhouse. Albin had some pets, and Nora wanted to sit on Jackson's shoulders once more. It was a hard matter to tear away from the old homestead after all. It nestled up among the hills so snug and sheltered.

"It will be hard to find a prettier place," observed Edla.

"Well, I have spent nearly fourteen years here," said Mrs. Swenson; "years that would have been the

happiest of my life, but for this terrible war. I love the place, but I hate the memories of the last three or four years."

"Well good-bye, Emely; good-bye Uncle Gustav"—and the air was full of good-byes for a while.

August was delegated to accompany them to New Orleans, where he also had Albin's picture made.

Otto, a distant relative, was installed in the house to take care of the place.

But in one corner of the parlor stood the bust of Houston, cast in plaster of Paris—forgotten.

"I guess they thought he would break in the shipping," remarked Otto to his wife as he moved the bust to what he thought a safer place.

But Swenson did not forget his noble friend, neither the bust.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was some time after the departure of the Swenson family, that B. A. Shepherd, from Houston, suddenly, unannounced, stood at Palm's door one night.

"Who is it?" Palm demanded.

"It is Shepherd from Houston," answered a quiet voice.

It was with some misgivings and suspicion Palm opened the door and let the light fall on the well-known benevolent face of Shepherd.

“Well I declare! What brings you around at this time of day, Mr. Shepherd?”

Shepherd looked around in the room and said in a low tone, “Business.”

Palm looked like an interrogation mark.

“Well, Palm, you see it is this way. I have decided to reopen my business and banking institution under my own management again. We deemed it wise to close down during the war. I never liked to risk either my own or other people’s funds. Absolutely safe and conservative principles are my motto. I think I am known and trusted yet for that. And my great aim is to live up to it in the future. I am proud to know that Swenson trusted me, and still trusts me, for that”— He rose up and said in low, almost whispering tone, “Are we sure not to be overheard?”

Palm, mystified, motioned him to come to his private room. The door shut, he resumed, in a low confidential tone: “Swenson has something like \$20,000 deposited in the fireplaces of his old house in Govalle, and has asked me to come up here and get you to go with me out there and unearth those funds. Did you suspect anything like that, Palm?”

Palm smacked his lips. “Oh well,” he said, “now I remember that sudden fishing party, when Swenson was so set on having us all go to the river, while



he had the fireplaces repaired, on the pretext that the rain had damaged so much at home. He told me that the papers deposited with you would show where the funds were placed, if I missed any money in the safe. Oh, he was discreet all right."

"I think Swenson is one of the few men that have made any money while all the rest of us have lost, during this war. Do you know how his cotton investment is panning out?"

"No." Palm did not know exactly.

"Well, they say the profit is going to run into sums that can only be expressed in seven figures."

"Swenson is, no doubt, cut out for a financier," said Palm.

"Exactly. Now as to my errand. Can we go out there tomorrow and attend to that part of the job? Have you got a trusty man around there? I want to go out there in the morning and leave from there for Bastrop. Then I can make it to Richmond in two days."

Otto had hardly finished his breakfast when the two men were on the place. To think that so much money was hidden in the house and nobody knew anything about it. It was wonderful. And Otto pried the bricks loose, broke the mortar underneath in pieces, dug carefully in the dirt and struck something hard. There it is! They all exclaimed. A few

more careful spadings brought the ducking covered box with its contents to light. The tin box was lifted out, opened, and the contents counted. Ten thousand dollars in gold rolls, a few ten-dollar gold pieces, a few silver dollars—all there.

Now for the other place. To describe one place is to describe both. "Yes, the money is all there, Palm, and I want you to sign an acknowledgment that you have turned the fund over to me, and I will acknowledge that I have received the same. That will be endorsement of check and certificate of deposit." [It is said that about \$40,000 were deposited in a safe buried in the store building and unearthed at Shepherd's visit also. How much of this is true, has never been asserted.]

"I hope you will have proper escort, Mr. Shepherd?"

"Oh, I will have some trusty gentlemen for company from Bastrop. We will make the journey thither in full day light. But we are well prepared and are not going to take any risk." And in a few minutes he was driving down the hill in a brisk trot.

"This is a funny country, 'shore,' " communicated Otto to Mr. Palm, as they watched the vehicle disappear down the creek.

But when Ernest, the mason, heard about the great sum of money he had unknowingly helped to hide

away so successfully, he exclaimed: "Mein Gott, vot fool I vos!"

\* \* \* \* \*

It was a very excited and impatient company from Texas, aboard the good steamship, delayed by a Gulf hurricane, that plied the waters between Galveston and New Orleans as it slowly, oh so slowly, but majestically came up the charnel to New Orleans. The telephone at the arm of the modern business man was unknown in those days, and Swenson, after having inquired for the thirtieth time if the "Reliance" had arrived in sight yet, determined to devote his time to correspondence and business in the hotel at the corner of Commerce and Canal Streets, when a rumbling sound on the stairway arrested his attention.

"Ith papa up there?" queried a shrill little voice that electrified his whole being, and had in its sound music more beautiful than any melody he ever heard in his life, either before or after that momentous hour.

The next moment he was standing in the doorway fondly embracing his brave life partner, the wife who so heroically had watched and tended the brood of young children and brought them all safely there with her.

His face twitched like one in convulsion, and tears trickled down his cheeks and mingled with hers as

she sobbed almost hysterically. Then he opened his arms, and, gathering his four children, was kissed and "mussed" to his heart's content.

There was laughter galore, and the reticent Augusta and Edla at last came in for a word of greeting and praise, while August stood like a military guard during the scene, and only made a short salute.

But what is the use of trying to picture the reunion of a family after a separation of nearly two years? Suffice it to say that it was a complete triumph of human nature, with all its affections, over the cold calculating shrewd business man. And the wife said contentedly: "Now I will let you take the place at the helm of affairs again," while the children hummed: "My papa! My papa!"—

The following incidents will show how Swenson remembered old friends and servants in Texas later. When Morgan Hamilton was Comptroller and Sam Harris, Treasurer, with Swente Palm clerk in the Comptroller's department, while he at the same time received appointment as vice consul for Sweden and Norway, the State eleemosynary institutions—Insane, Deaf and Dumb, and Blind Institutes were so destitute of funds that it was recommended to close them down and send the inmates to their respective homes. In vain did August Palm offer to credit them with provisions for any length of time needed. About \$50,000

cash money was needed to keep them in running shape without interruption. A telegram to Swenson in New York was all that was necessary.

The money was forthcoming without inquiries. The situation was saved. Friends from old days were not forgotten.

Some years later, Andrew Palm, brother of August B. Palm, of Palm Valley, was delegated and authorized by Swenson to go to Richmond in Fort Bend County and distribute different tracts of land to the old slaves that had served Swenson during his stay on the plantation. The old hands received from 40 to 80 acres of land apiece, and deeds which stipulated that it must be inherited from father to son, but never to be sold.

The pipe dream that the government was going to give each negro "forty acres of land and a mule" was never realized, but Swenson was not the only man who showed his old slaves that he remembered their faithful services.

The valuable collection of thousands of rare coins, which Swenson donated to the State University, proved his loyalty to the best interests of the State where he resided for over twenty-five years, and where he had intended to remain permanently.

It yet remains for the University to befittingly display this collection of rare coins, for students and

visitors, instead of having them closed up in a big iron safe, in a dark place where they can scarcely be inspected.

The land, property, and pecuniary help he gave to relatives, the education he bestowed upon others, the part he took in the immigration movement from Sweden to Texas, all goes to show his love and interest for the welfare of Texas. But the part that he and his brother in Sweden, "Johan i Langasa," took in the great immigration movement to this country during the latter part of the sixties is part of another chapter.



## CHAPTER XVI

### THE MERCHANT PRINCE

The Swenson Mercantile establishment on Commerce and Canal Streets in New Orleans, covering nearly a whole block, besides great warehouses in other parts of the city, was one of the great business houses in those days. Dry goods, leather goods, hides, wool and cotton were handled in enormous quantities. Swenson seemed to have access to almost unlimited funds, and the Perkin, Swenson & Company banking business in New Orleans was subsequently formed.

“Do you know, Swenson, that the Atlantic cable is relaid and works like a charm?” Perkins confided one day.

“Truly, wonders have not ceased,” Swenson commented. “Think what it will mean to business and government? I believe I will send a telegram home to mother in Lattarp one of these days.”

There were almost no limit to possibilities opened up by the telegraph in those days—if only the Atlantic cable would hold this time. They remembered

the result in 1857, and the disappointment when it failed to work. But the cable held.

Swenson early developed the fondness for the S. M. S. signature, and used it very much as trade marks are used today, pregnant with a dignified, substantial importance which Swenson endeavored to give it.

"I cannot tell you how proud he was of that signature," one of his employees remarked.

A check with the S. M. S. was cashed in Hartford, Conn., by a relative, as readily as in New York or New Orleans.

Old Harloe, the hatter, of New Orleans, happened to return with his cargo of New York goods on the same boat as an S. M. S. shipment. On the way up the channel the boat foundered, and the goods were thrown, in confusion, overboard and the old gentleman among them. Anxious for his perishable goods, he floundered about, among the boxes and bales in the water. "But it seemed to me, Swenson," he related, "that wherever I looked, there was S. M. S. on every box that floated around me."

"Seems to me Swenson," he remarked, "if you are going at it in this fashion, you will S. M. S. the whole town before you quit."

It was very near the fulfilling of the Govalle dream, where big ships unloaded on one side, and merchandise rolled out on the other side of the store. After

a little over two years operations, the hard times of the reconstruction period forced Swenson to close out in New Orleans and open the Swenson & Perkins banking house in New York. Swenson, in order to protect his interests later, took over the great North Bend sugar plantation in Louisiana. It was here and in New Orleans in the early seventies, that Mrs. Kerr, known to old-timers as "Little Greta", entertained her Texas friends in such royal fashion, that they talk about it yet. And Colonel Swenson of New York, where he then resided, would S. M. S. a check of one or two hundred dollars to some beloved, but less fortunate relative in Texas.

It is an illustration of Swenson's magnetic personality, that nearly all of the old-timers will invariably say: "Swenson seemed to take a special liking to me," when talking of him.

\* \* \* \* \*

1867 was written on the letterheads, that went eastward to the little home in Lattarp, Sweden. From the Exchange in New York, a steady stream of orders, consignments, purchases, telegrams and exchanges flowed continually. Clerks and messengers came and went. Hides, wool and cotton were still handled on a commission basis. Large consignments of merchandise, that were purchased in the open New York market, were sent to southern merchants, on

commission. The Panhandle holdings\* in Texas were developed into immense ranches, where hundreds of thousands of the fine blooded cattle and horses were subsequently raised.

The Govalle property was converted in Gould railroad shares, and the hub around which all the business hummed was "S. M. S." Chittendon, Joffray, Claflin, Bliss and others were among the big merchants of those days and drafts for \$200,000, a big sum of money then, were cashed at sight between these merchant princes without any hesitation.

But between the busy moments Swenson found time to think of his old friends in Sweden, as well as Texas. When his friend Col. Brackenridge of San Antonio, with many others, was compelled to look after a more reliable stock of laborers than the free negroes, with Federal backing, August B. Palm of Austin, with Swenson in New York, and brother "Johan i Langasa" in Sweden established an immigration bureau which brought into Texas hundreds of emmigrants that have proven

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\*The splendidly illustrated and ably written book, "The S. M. Swenson Ranch" of northwest Texas, gives more information about this wonderful property, and the colonization of it than can be gathered elsewhere. After reading that souvenir pamphlet you do not wonder at the pride taken in their ranch work or the products therefrom.

good, loyal, and desirable citizens. They, with millions of others have done their best to rescue the word "hyphen" from necessarily designating a less desirable class of citizens. With flashing eye, they are today demanding what is coming to them as loyal law-abiding citizens.

Daniel Heard was going back to Texas again after a ten-years absence. He was bringing with him about a hundred immigrants, from the old country, the son of Swenson's brother "Johan" included. "The city of Baltimore" had made a record trip across the Atlantic and was moored at the "White Star Line" pier, one of the last days of June. Swenson had to come down and see them and invited some of them to his home in Brooklyn.

"It seems to me, it has taken you an awful long time, Heard, to get hold of these immigrants?"

"Do you think so, Swenson?"

"Yes, you went away in 1857 and now it is 1867."

"Oh well, Colonel, you know that the war prevented me from coming back."

Yes, you got away from the strife that we all had to live through in one way or another. But the Union is preserved, although the price that was paid seems unproportionally great. I tell you, Heard, when the Anglo Saxon goes to war for principles, sacred to them, it is not child's play. If the two

factions had not underrated each other, they would have hesitated to meet in such a dreadful combat. But thank God, it is all over. I hope the reconstruction work is not going to effect you too hard down there."

"Well Colonel, we are not going into politics. We came to work."

"I hope so. But how are the folks at home?"

"All well! Your mother is as busy as ever with her looms, and branches out on art weaving, until she makes even the nobility come and admire her tapestry."

"Well, mother is great when it comes to art weaving. And how is father?"

"As usual."

Swenson took his nephew and the rest of the company around to Broadway, Central Park and Barnum's Museum. They admired Tom Thumb, his little wife and baby, had a sumptuous supper, and took in the greatest fireworks they had ever seen, and thus were well satisfied with their first fourth of July and its celebration. To be sure the cannon fire crackers startled them quite a bit, but when Swenson explained the nature and the spirit of the celebration, and promised it would be all over by tomorrow, they quieted down and came to look at it as a harmless (?) amusement.



Before the party, the balance of whom were quartered in "Castle Garden," sailed in the old rickety boat that came very near proving a death trap to the whole crowd, Swenson, dressed in silk hat, Prince Albert coat, and white vest, addressed his countrymen whose colonization he had hoped for all these many years:

"Boys," he said, "you are coming over here with about as much worldly goods as I had thirty years ago. Some of you have more. You are going to a part of this great and grand country where there is good opportunity awaiting the industrious faithful toiler. Be diligent, honest, frugal and sober and you will succeed like I have done. For the lazy, dishonest, intemperate fellow this country has no use. Remember the religious principles you have been taught at home, and some day, I hope we will be able to send a minister to preach the word of God to you and teach you the right way in your native tongue. Good-bye, my countrymen. God be with you."\*

So they departed, and new ones would come later—all bound for Texas. All that were destined to Aus-

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\*The promise of sending a minister to care for the spiritual needs of the mostly young and unmarried immigrants was fulfilled within a year, when the Rev. Carleen, a Swedish Episcopal minister visited the colonies in Austin and Palm Valley.

tin, Texas, were brought out to the Govalle homestead and given board and lodging before they were sent to their respective places.

If Swenson could have stayed in Texas and realized his ambitions and dreams, there is no telling what extent the immigration or colonization would have taken. In all likelihood the plans would have been carried out on a larger and grander scale. But he did what he could to further the cause of the overcrowded population in the rocky, often barren country, in his home province and it was a benevolent act to help them to emigrate, even if they had to work twelve months to repay their "passage."

So the years rolled on. The business prospered. Lean years were met with the surplus of fat years, and no harm came of it. Business was systematized and ran like clockwork. Some relatives employed here and there gave assurance of efficiency and loyalty in the different departments of affairs. The old order passeth and the S. M. Swenson & Sons Banking Company was formed. New help was secured, and with Greta settled in the South, the sons duly inaugurated in the private affairs, it suddenly dawned on the busy man, getting gray and somewhat worn, from a hard contact with a busy relentless world, that a little rest and a trip to Sweden would be just the right thing to

do. Surely when a man has worked long, hard and successfully until he is sixty years of age, he is entitled to some recreation.

"Wife," he said one day, "I believe I will go home to Sweden this summer and rest up. Will you go with me?"

"No," Mrs. Swenson did not think she could go. "But it ought to be about time for you to go home and buy that estate you promised your mother. You have made money enough, and if you intend to do it you must act while she lives and can enjoy it."

Swenson tapped his plate gleefully. "Mother will live to be a hundred years old. See if she don't. We come from a long-lived stock of people. But Uncle Swerte wrote me that Ingsberg is for sale. He would like to buy it, he says, if I can get him the money.

"Oh, I remember how, often as a barefoot boy, I would run by there on some errand and wish I had an estate like that."

"Is it pretty?"

"It is a dignified old place with three stories, roomy and substantial, with wide fields, and the finest timber in the woods, pine and spruce as straight and tall as the highest masts on any ship in the harbor of New York."

“If it is good enough for Uncle Swente, it would not be too good for your mother.”

“Too good? Why that old mother of mine deserves the best in the land. I believe I will go over this summer and look at it.”\*

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\*Margret on Lattarp died at the ripe old age of ninety-nine years. On the tombstone of his parents Swenson wrote an epitaph characteristic of him. Translated to English it runs something like this:

“She lived to weave her mats and flax;  
His life was spent in paying tax.”

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE ESTATE

The foxhounds gave their peculiar bark which indicated that they had scented a "trail." The horn which the "master of the chase" blew called the different hunters together. The indication was that foxes were plentiful. They had even invaded the chicken yard.

"There must be a brood of young ones," the shrewd old game warden of the Ingsberg estate confided to his master, Captain Tissell.

"Well, Rapp, what are we to do?" asked the captain.

Old Rapp scratched his head. "If your honor and Baron Wrangel will take station here behind the stone fence, and Count Hamilton hide behind that old stump, I think we will stand a good chance to see the old fox sneaking to his lair just in the edge of that thicket over yonder. I have noticed that is his favorite trail."

"All right, Rapp. You ought to know. But don't

keep us here all day. I am getting as hungry as a wolf. And say, gentlemen, don't shoot any elk, it is out of season now."

"How about wolves, Captain?"

"Ah, well, salt all the wolves you can get hold of."

"Bang!" went Old Rapp's repeater, and a fine old fox jumped seven feet in the air"—

"Why in thunder and tarnation, Rapp, didn't you wait a bit?"

"He would have escaped to his lair, Your Excellency, if I had waited two seconds more."

"Well, it is my poor luck," growled the Captain. "Nothing ever bigger than rabbits and grouse comes my way."

"Salt a wolf for a change, Captain," the other hunters bantered him.

"Or a bear!"

"Don't get sassy now, you old good for nothing Nimrods. All you will have to show for a morning's hunt will be empty guns."

"Well, couldn't we have a shot at one of these does?"

"We have plenty for a supply of venison and we don't want to kill the does. They will bring young ones when spring comes. A buck would be different, but we don't need it just now, besides I don't like



to look in the eyes of a deer that I have killed."

"Why?"

"Because the look of a deer haunts me for a good long while."

"Oh, you are a tenderfoot, Captain!"

"Perhaps so, but let us repair to the warden's house and taste that haunch of venison he has on the spit. I bet it will taste splendid after the hunt."

And Old Rapp gathered, according to habit, all the game from the morning's hunt and hastened home to warn the old lady turning the roast to put the coffee pot on the fire, because the noblemen would soon be in for dinner.

The tall, stately fir and spruce with straight trunks seemed to reach almost to the heavens. The twilight sifted down and created a wierd (uninterpretable feeling while the hunters strode slowly towards the warden's house.

"Fine timber," remarked one.

"Yes, and an unusually fine estate all around, isn't it?"

"Come now, Tissel! What is the matter with you? Are you not delighted with your property? I would be, if I were you."

"Well, can't you stay the week out?" the Captain queried. "I tell you gentlemen, I hate to be left alone

here and especially at Ingsberg during the night time."

"It is not haunted, is it?"

The Captain nodded in a silent way that was very significant.

"Oh, what a joke! A Captain in the army, afraid of ghosts."

"Who said I was afraid?" Tissell demanded. Can't a man have a dislike for a thing without necessarily being afraid?"

"Well, we will stay with you all week, maybe we can have a glimpse of a real ghost for once in our lifetime."

"But what is it that matters, Ingsberg? With all this fine timber, big fields, the peasants on their small farms near it, and the mansion as the crowning thing, it seems to me ideal."

"I will show you, gentlemen, when we get home, the two rooms which tradition says were the cell of some baroness, countess or other lady of nobility. There she was kept in a captive state while her husband had another woman in the house for a wife. The children born of this unholy union were never permitted to see daylight. Bones of their small bodies were said to have been found in the fireplace and ash piles. In the meantime the food was served through a hole in the wall to the poor, imprisoned

soul, who was never permitted to leave her prison until released by death. I will show you the hole in the wall. It is there yet."

"A tragic story!"

"Yes, a very tragic tradition, but the worst thing now is, you cannot break the servants from keeping up, and circulating ghost stories concerning it. They will sit at nights and tell their tales, until they don't dare to go out alone at night time, and if you send one on a night errand anywhere in the house you may hear a scream loud enough to raise the dead, when they imagine they have seen or heard something ghostly. I tell you, gentlemen, when a household gets panic stricken like that it creates a peculiar atmosphere that you cannot fight. It is something you cannot take in your hands and combat. It is a real, subtle, influence like sulphur fumes which seem to choke you slowly but persistently. You cannot shake it off!"

Is it just a fertile imagination, or do you think there is a real cause producing the panic?"

"Well, we will ask Old Rapp when we get to the table."

So they sat around the table, enjoyed the juicy venison and the brown bread with good butter and sipped the coffee, lighted their cigars, stuck their thumbs in their vest arm-holes, tilted their chairs in

a comfortable position, and interrogated Old Rapp to their hearts' content.

"Well, Rapp, did you not serve as an attendant to old Dr. Hognander in his days at Ingsberg?"

The stalwart military training of Old Rapp came to a sudden awakening. He made military salute, touched his old capless head and answered:

"Yes, Captain,."

"Was not your father a servant at Ingsberg also?"

"He was."

"How old were you when you started to serve the Doctor?"

"About fifteen years."

"Did you or your father ever see any ghost in the mansion?"

"We were never allowed to speak on that subject, Your Excellency."

"But now, I command you to speak."

"Rapp made another salute.

"Did you ever see anything?"

Rapp was perplexed.

"I couldn't swear to anything," he managed to say.

"Well, but did you not see something unusual, once in a while, in the night time?"

"I thought I did, yes."

"Do you remember whether your father had seen anything?"

"I do, Captain."

"What in thunder do you stand there holding back like an unprimed old pump for?" the impatient young Count broke in. "We want to hear a ghost story. Go on now."

Rapp made another salute, bowed, and cleared his throat.

"It was this way, Your Excellency: Father was footman for many years to Sir Sjolín and was also the butler. And sometimes when he spoke about something incredulous, the Colonel would jokingly remark: 'I believe you have been sampling my brandy again, John.'

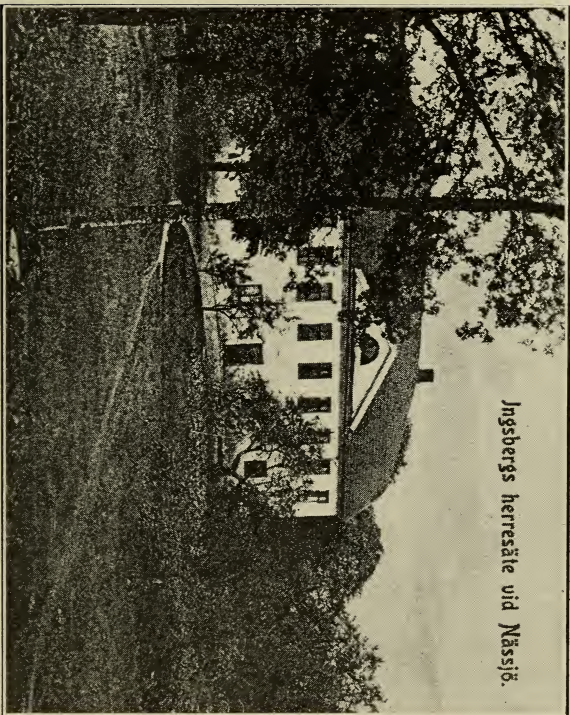
"So when father one day remarked: 'I saw her again last night carrying the tray,' the Colonel says, 'Yes, John, I noticed there was a quart of my best brandy gone last night. That's where you get your inspiration'"—

"Well, go on, Rapp."

"But when I had to be attendant to the Doctor, I had to sleep in the little room outside of the Doctor's night chamber. I was scared and would rather have slept at home, but there was no help for it. I had to stay there many a time and wait for my people late at night."



Jngsbergs herresäte vid Nässjö.



"THE ESTATE"





“And did you see anything?”

“Well, I cannot place my finger on the Book and swear to it, but it seems to me I have seen a woman many a time coming from those two rooms on the east side, with her tray.”

The three men of nobility and education looked at each other.

“And if I say that I have seen the very same thing, gentlemen, what then?” corroborated Captain Tis-sell?

“I don’t understand who the lady with the tray represents,” the young Count wondered.

“It can’t be the lady in the cell-room.”

“Oh, I guess it is a hallucination.”

“No one believes in ghosts nowadays.”

“What do you think, Baron?”

The Baronet—a middle-aged man with a student’s mind—reflected on his face—looked out thorough the little window as if he had seen something far off:

“I think,” he said, in slow, measured tones, “that psychological researches warrant the conclusion that it is not impossible at all. That a great agony of mind at death-beds, or under a cruel mode of death inflicted by others, or when there is an intense desire to impart an important communication in the dying hour, that not only the atmosphere to a certain extent, but even the very walls, ceiling, floor and furniture

may be impregnated with these intense feelings. You mentioned, Captain, how real the panicky atmosphere in the house is. I think it is something of the same order. Have you not visited some old, historical building, where some great deed or tragedy took place, and noticed the peculiar feeling which took possession of you that seemed to pervade the air and even cling to the walls. You could see and imagine the event for which it is celebrated as you never could before."

The young Count was all ears and intensely interested.

"You may be right, Baron," he admitted. "But how about the lady with the tray. What does she want?"

"Well," resumed the Baron, "I may be wrong in my theory about it, but it is not the imprisoned lady that is stalking about—if there is any stalking about at all. She may have been at peace with her Maker if she was sane, and have become reconciled to her fate and died in peace. Or she may have been insane and not her own self. Then she would have lost her personality more or less, and consequently her power to leave any strong impression behind her. But, she may have had a faithful maid, who carried that tray with food to her, three times a day, who stamped the floors in helpless agony, and suffered perhaps even more than her imprisoned mistress; or she might

have been a cruel person who committed unpardonable sins against a helpless victim, who could not defend herself, and, at last, in her dying hour woke up to the fact that there was a judgment and a well-deserved punishment in store for her, and that might be the terrible impression left behind."

But the young count wanted to know if a good coat of kalsomining would not cover up the influence attached to the walls?

"Perhaps so! Perhaps a good disinfectant that would come in contact with the senses first would crowd out the chances for other thoughts, feelings or influences to get control of the mind. Perhaps a thorough cleaning, painting and renovating would rid the place of the whole thing."

"But," the Captain spoke up, "I have decided to sell this old thing if I can get a decent price for it. I am tired of it and want to get away from here. I wish you would stay the week out with me, then I will leave also for military duties. But I hear Colonel Swenson from New York is coming home to visit his mother and relatives, and is looking for something to invest his money in. They say he is a millionaire now, though when he left Barkeryd he was nothing but a poor boy. How he got his Colonelship, I do not know."

“Well, make him pay a good price for the estate, if you do sell it.”

\* \* \* \* \*

The volume of talk three men, hunting at leisure, can turn out during four days, roving in fields and woods would fill many a volume. Their appetites were excellent, the conversation pleasant, and at night they slept like logs unmolested by the ghost with the tray. The foxes they hunted and finally bagged proved to be the all-absorbing topic, and the ghost was forgotten.

The hole in the wall was forgotten too, but on the last day of their visit, Captain Tissell suddenly remembered his promise and took them over to the abandoned part of the building and showed them the hole in the wall.

The young Count stroked his forehead.

“It seems to me now that I must have dreamed of the lady with the tray one night. I had forgotten all about it, but I suddenly remember it now. She stood before me with that tray and said something to me.”

“Didn’t she say, ‘I am so sorry!’?”

“Perhaps so, but it was only a dream. I was not awake.”

“Yes, perhaps so.”

\* \* \* \* \*

The story of the home-coming of one Swedish-American is very much like all others. They get thrilled through and through as they approach the well-known shores and home places. Their best and most tender feelings are aroused to their highest pitch when they embrace their feeble old parents and other relations. They spend their money freely with their home folks, and walk about where the old play grounds used to be, and where old memories are fondly recalled, and enjoy it all.

Swenson did all that and more too.

It seems that Consul Palm had prearranged matters between Captain Tissel and Swenson so when he took his mother out for a drive one day, they went to brother "Johan i Langasa," and together they visited Ingsberg and looked it over.

"But, my boy, what do you want to do with an estate like this?" the old mother said. "Do you intend to move back to Sweden?"

"Don't you remember, mother, that I promised you an estate when I grew up and made a lot of money?"

"Yes, my son, but haven't you given me everything I need in abundance? How will I be able to manage it?"

"We will try to get Brother Johan to take the management on his shoulders. Won't you do that Johan?"



And Johan acquiesced.

"I will come home often and rest up, mother. I am getting old and gray like you, and I need a little recreation now and then. We will renovate the old mansion from bottom to top, before you move into it. Then you can start as many looms as you want. I will stand good for all the yarn you need for your looms."

"But won't it appear like we are stuck up, when we move in here, and ride in a fine carriage. I would rather have our plain little wagon from Lattarp to ride in?"

"Now, mother, listen to me. You are one of the smartest, pluckiest little mothers that ever lived. Nothing is too good for you. Should a woman who can carry off the prizes at expositions like you do, and present even the King with artweaved cloth for a vest and get thanked for it, should you feel stuck up, or need feel uncomfortable in your new station? It seems to me you are only coming into your own.

"And remember, Johan, that we will not economize on fertilizers on the estate. We want to take a pride in the crops, cattle, appearance of the mansion and gardens. I will enjoy seeing everything shine and glisten with thrift and order."

It was not idle talk or far away plans this time. When the next spring rolled around "Margret on

Lattarp," as all the old-timers persisted in calling her, and Johan, her son, with his family, were duly installed in the renovated Ingsberg Mansion.

The looms and spinning wheels boomed and hummed with more energy than ever and Johan had to pay hundreds of kronor for fine yarn.

"Mother," he would say, "you are getting worse, and more extravagant every year. What will Swen say to having a bill of two hundred and fifty kronor sent him for yarn."

But the eighty-year-old lady told him that Swen had promised her all the yarn she could use in her looms and she was going to take him up on it.

Dressed in finest of silk, behind a pair of beautiful horses, the old lady—who in 1849 had returned from her foreign journey so unassuming, alone, and weary—was taking her usual morning ride, according to Swenson's specific prescription. When the peasants saw the fine carriage coming they said to one another: "Here comes the 'Lady Margret on Lattarp,'" and many a mother sighed and said to herself: "I wish I had a son like Swenson."

"Don't you get bothered by ghosts, Frau Margret?" some one asked the old lady.

But she told them that she had always been too busy to care for ghosts, and now she was so old the ghosts did not care for her; besides, she knew the

Lord's prayer and the benediction was sufficient against any ghosts, witches or goblins under the sun. She was not afraid of them. But her granddaughter thought she saw the lady with the tray the first night of her stay, and Johan was not sure, but something was a little unusual sometimes, and the little grandchildren were regaled with ghost stories by the servants until they dared not look out of the door at night time. Still, they were always wild for some more hair-bristling ghost stories the next day.

Even Captain Tissell would beg one of the small boys to sleep with him when he came to Ingsberg for a hunt and was invited to stay overnight.

But old Margret would read her prayers, and Johan the Word of God, like a true father should do in his house, and no harm ever came to the household.

Old-timers remembered S. M. Swenson as reading the Bible with his family every day. Thus was his home and business builded on the solid rock and not on the shifting sands. Thus the true citizen is made.

While in Sweden, two years after his purchase of Ingsberg, Swenson wrote the following letter to his life-long trusted friend Consul Palm of Austin, Texas:

“Ingsberg, 14th July, 1879.

“Dear Uncle Swente:

“I suppose you have heard that I left New York for Sweden to spend a few months here. I have been

here three weeks. All our relatives are well and mother seems to be as well and as active as when I was here two years ago, and constantly employed in weaving. [The plucky old lady was then eighty-six years old.]

“This place is now very much improved in every way, and it is very beautiful. It has been a late spring with rainy and cold weather since I came here. Everything in the garden, fields and meadows looks green and fresh and lovely. They are now in the midst of the haying season. The crops of grain, potatoes, vegetables, as well as fruit in the orchards, are better here than elsewhere, owing, no doubt, to abundant fertilizing and good farming. The crops in Smaland are very promising, but there is a scarcity of money, low prices on everything, and laboring people begging for work. If they had the means for emigration, the outflow to America would be immense. Commercial manufactures and railway traffic is depressed, very many failures have taken place and are being added to every week. The people, nevertheless, look cheerful and apparently happy. Perhaps they conceal their real feelings.

“A good many persons have inquired about you and desired me to present their compliments when I see you.

"I had a letter from Judge Duval in which he mentions that there is a very severe drouth and very hot weather in Texas. I feel sorry for you, and wish you were here among the shady groves and cool fresh breezes. You would soon feel that the sunny days here are the most pleasant. The thermometer has ranged between 50 and 70 degrees fahrenheit, seldom above 60 degrees, and occasionally I enjoy a fire in the 'kakelugn' (heater).

"Since I came here I have stayed at home most of the time. Carl Swenson is my companion. He is very lively and pleasant and I suppose one of the great fiddlers. He is very industrious and if his health permits I doubt not he will be a great musician.

"I have been to Lattarp (the old home place) twice, to Jonkoping, once. Both are lovely and the latter improving—orderly and pleasant.

"Yesterday I spent the day at Lattarp rowing around the beautiful lake, which was as smooth as a looking glass, reflecting its beautiful surroundings. We landed at Krokesbo, Boarp and Alarp, and rambled about in their yards and gardens at leisure. Boarp belongs now to a good farmer. Lattarp is much improved, and I know of no place anywhere which excels it in natural beauty. All they need is a good and handsome dwelling to make it a gem of a country home.



"I have had letters and telegrams from my wife and her traveling companions, Albin, Nora, Mr. and Mrs. Atkins (our neighbors).

"I expect them about 10 p. m. this evening, and all is in readiness for their reception except 'areportar' (triumphal arches) and Chinese lanterns, which I understand mother and the servants are preparing to decorate the grounds with.

"The party have had an unpleasant voyage across the Atlantic, and I think they will enjoy the quiet beauty and freshness of Ingsberg.

"Please remember me to Uncle Gustav and his family—also to all my friends in Austin, and with love to you and Aunt Agness,

"I am yours affectionately,

"S. M. SWENSON."

In addition, the following information may be of interest:

Ingarsberg—being the full name of the old estate—dates with its history back to the thirteenth century. Herr Peder Axelson Tott possessed the estate early in 1400. His widow, Frau Martha, descendant from the Bo Jonson Grip nobility, the richest people in Sweden in those days, turned the estate over to her son Axel Pederson, 1462. Later it was ravaged and burned during the Danish invasion in the early part of the fifteenth century.



During the sixteenth century it was rebuilt by Gen. Queckfeldt, but further away from the lake. The Queckfeldts, who fought under Carolus the XII and followed him to the disaster at Pultava in Russia, and the exile in Bender, Turkey, had their coat of arms in the parish church, hanging on the walls until 1791 when the church was rebuilt.

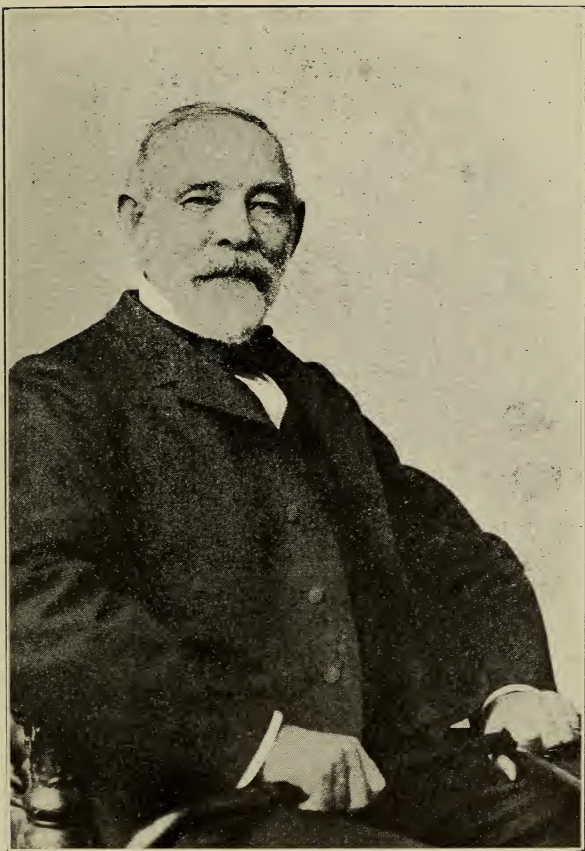
Early in 1800 the estate came into the hands of Sir Anders Sjolín, who rebuilt the castle in 1805, which is the identical building of today. His stepdaughter and heir married the family doctor, Hognander, at the ripe age of sixty-three years. She left this peculiar proverb behind her, remembered and quoted yet:

"The Lord only knows if a body does the right thing," said Aunt Maria when she married at sixty-three.

The estate came into the hands of a relative, Bank Director Björk. Later it was bought by Lieutenant Tissel, and in 1874 by "Johan i Langasa," financed by his brother, S. M. Swenson.

Today, after some subdivisions, the main estate is in possession of Herr Carl Swenson, a nephew of Swenson and son of Johan i Langasa.

Three stories high, with a background of rocky mountains and stately fir trees, almost concealed from view by big shade trees lies the old castle today in still repose with its romantic history.



S. M. SWENSON  
In Later Years



\* \* \* \* \*

Swenson, according to his promise, visited the old estate quite often, and would go home every summer for several successive years. It is said, by those who had opportunity to observe him, that often he would come up from behind and slip a bank note, or coin, into the hand of some deserving or needy peasant of the estate, and then walk off, pretending not to hear the surprised thankfulness of the party, for he had an aversion to a public display of his benevolence. Part of his religion consisted in doing good to those nearest him first, and the rumor that he was hard on the "dissenters" on the estate is stoutly denied by those who are in position to know.

In 1896, suffering from some chronic ailment, he underwent an operation only to succumb, and pass away, at the ripe age of eighty years. The excellent wife, who shared his early hardships and later the well-deserved success, has also passed away. "Little Greta" (later Mrs. Kerr of New Orleans), the oldest daughter, died at an early age. Eric P. and S. Albin, the sons, are today well known, prominent, successful bankers and business men, and as fond of the S. M. S. signature, as a mark of high standard, quality and reliability as their father was in his days. Their young sons are being trained to take their place

some future day. "Little Nora," as we remember from Govalle, is now Mrs.———

We regret that we have not been able to secure the pictures of the whole family from the Govalle period, owing to the holiday rush to get this book in print, but anyone interested can find the pictures of the now senior members of the firm in the S. M. S. Ranch booklet, Stamford (Jones County), Texas. They look like "the sons of their father."

The people whom they and their father have assisted to immigrate to the Lone Star State, have also developed in the meantime. Their colonies, residences, churches and schools compare very favorably with other developments in this State, and the younger generation has very little of the "Hyphenated" about them. They are Texans—Americans—first, last, and all the time, thanks to their transitory ancestors—the "Hyphenated."

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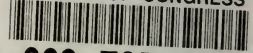








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